

# TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Date: August 3, 2010

Time: 1:30 P.M.

Members Present: John Safay, George Williams, Drew Laughlin

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Curtis Coltrane, Scott Liggett, Charles Cousins, Shawn Colin, Shea Farrar, Anne Cyran, Heather Colin, Nicole Dixon, Jill Foster, Teri Lewis

Others Present: Tom Peeples, *Mayor*, Bill Ferguson, Ken Heitzke, Bill Harkins, *Councilman*, Thomas Barnwell, Jr., Dr. Ben Williams, Dr. Emory Campbell, Robert Smith, *Heritage Library Foundation*, Richard Cyr, *Hilton Head Island PSD*, Mark Baker, *Public Art Committee*, Carolyn Torgerson, Christy Calloway, *Community Foundation of the Lowcountry*, Michael Marks, *Coastal Discovery Museum*, Pamela Martin Ovens, *Beaufort County Historical Society*, Mary Amonetti, Bill Dalton, *Retired Landscape Architect*

Media Present: Tom Barton, *The Island Packet*

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**1. Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 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 July 6, 2010. Councilman Laughlin seconded. The Minutes of July 6, 2010 were unanimously approved.

**4. Unfinished Business:**

**5. New Business**

• **Stoney Pump Station**

Shea Farrar, Senior Planner, Community Development Department advised staff recommends Town Council approve in concept the conveyance of permanent easement rights to Hilton Head Island Public Service District (HHPSD) for the establishment and operation of a regional sewer lift station and its required infrastructure on Town owned property located at the corner of U.S. 278 and Old Wild Horse Road, with the following conditions:

1. The easement area is limited to a 50 x 50 square foot area.
2. The lift station is accessed from an existing curb cut on Old Wild Horse Road.
3. No interruption of wastewater service occurs for the two buildings located within the Town's property.

Chairman Safay commented this is part of the Town's ongoing initiative to aid in bringing sewer into areas that are not served at this point. Five years ago, approximately 20% of the properties in PSD #1 were still on septic. I understand today the figure is closer to 8%. We are making great strides to eliminate that problem. After a brief discussion, Councilman Laughlin moved the Public Facilities Committee recommend Town Council approve in concept the conveyance of permanent easement rights to Hilton Head Public Service District for the establishment and operation of a regional sewer lift station and its required infrastructure on Town owned property located at the corner of U.S. 278 and Old Wild Horse Road. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

- **Public Art**

Shawn Colin, Comprehensive Planning Manager, Community Development Department advised staff recommends the Public Facilities Committee forward a recommendation to Town Council to approve three proposed sites identified by the Public Art Committee of the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry as potential sites for placement of public art on Hilton Head Island.

In preparation for the 2011 Public Art Exhibition scheduled for fall of 2011, the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry established a Public Art Committee. One task assigned to this Committee was to identify potential sites that would be suitable for the placement of public art. The list of potential sites would be included in a Request for Proposals (RFP) to allow artists the ability to incorporate site characteristics and context into the design of their public art exhibits. The preliminary site selection list submitted by the Public Art Committee identified eight sites. After reviewing these locations with Town staff, the following three sites are submitted by the Public Art Committee to Town Council for consideration:

- **Site A**: New Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center site on U. S. Highway 278
- **Site B**: Jarvis Creek Park Lake
- **Site C**: Town-owned parcel in the Chaplin Community (on west side of U.S. Highway 278 past Sherwin Williams store and before the old Cracker Barrel site.)

Councilman Williams asked why these three sites moved to top of the list. Mr. Colin stated that based on comments provided by staff, these sites had the least amount of negative impact.

Mark Baker, Chairman of the Public Art Committee advised this is such an exciting adventure and they are pleased to advance it one step closer to our fall 2011 Public Art Exhibition. As Mr. Colin mentioned, we are in the process of preparing our call for artists and part of that would be the RFP. We have worked over the last several

months to survey potential sites on the Island. We started out with 10-12 sites and through discussions with Town staff and others have narrowed those sites to the three that you see. Those were selected primarily because they were sites that were ready for art sooner. As we acquire pieces of art in the future, we would be able to add additional sites.

Councilman Williams asked how the process would work. Mr. Baker stated the next step is to prepare the RFP which will be the Request for Proposals from artists, that will include site photographs so that the artists can begin to visualize the setting in which their piece might be placed. They will then submit a proposal for a piece of art to our Committee and the Selection Committee will then go through the qualification process of accepting proposals. The winners of that process will have their art exhibited at the Public Art Exhibition at Honey Horn. Ultimately there will be one piece of art procured for the Island. It will be placed at one of the above three sites. Mr. Baker stated the Public Art Committee will have to come back to the Town when they get ready to place the art. There will be multiple steps in which we will engage the Town in the process.

Christy Calloway, Community Foundation of the Lowcountry stated the wonderful thing about the art process is that when we allow the artists to respond to all three sites, it is going to inform us as we roll out the next and the next RFP's and the next purchases because we will start to understand the installation and site preparation that will need to go into all three sites. We will be able to incorporate our pre-requisites for those sites into serving the goals of the Town's intent for those places. The feedback from the RFP isn't just the artists making a submission to us in hopes that we will select them, but it will also be a feedback to help us plan a better public art policy and procedure going forward.

Councilman Laughlin moved the Public Facilities Committee recommend to Town Council the approval of these proposed sites as potential sites for placement of public art. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

- **Proposed Cancer Survivor's Park**

Anne Cyran, Planner, Community Development Department advised staff recommends the Public Facilities Committee make a recommendation to Town Council on whether staff should pursue a grant to plan and construct a Cancer Survivor's Park on Town owned property.

Town residents Sandy Stern and Patty Burke approached the Town about the possibility of the Town using a R.A. Bloch Cancer Foundation grant to build a park dedicated to cancer survivors on the site of the old Gullah Flea Market. They presented their proposal to the Parks and Recreation Commission at the July 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Commission subsequently recommended that Town Council move forward with the proposed park.

The R.A. Bloch Center Foundation provides grants to communities to develop parks dedicated to cancer survivors. The proposed park would be designed as a passive, landscaped space emphasizing the view of the marsh and featuring three standard elements provided by the Foundation: a bronze sculpture and two paths with informational plaques – a Positive Mental Attitude Walk and a Road to Recovery.

The Town would be expected to present a site plan to the Foundation for approval. If approved, the Foundation would provide funds of up to \$1 million to the Town to build the proposed park, with a one year deadline of completion. Payments would be made according to the following schedule: \$300,000 upon signing construction contracts, \$400,000 upon the start of construction, \$300,000 upon completion of the park and \$100,000 for perpetual maintenance of the park's dedication. To receive the grant, the Town must provide a guarantee that it would be responsible for the construction and perpetual maintenance of the park.

Anne Cyran showed the Committee the buildable area they were considering in addition to the adjoining property which would be used to create a passive park.

Chairman Safay asked how many acres they were talking about. Ms. Cyran stated that it was 4.3 acres, but includes a lot of wetlands that cannot be built on. The area that is actually buildable is a little less than one acre. The adjoining site is 1.8 acres. The Foundation has a standard site size which is 1.25 to 2 acres.

Sandy Stern and Patty Burke proceeded to show a brief power point presentation to show examples of what a Cancer Survivor Park looks like. Ms. Stern advised the Committee their landscape architect would be responsible for the site surveys, the filing of the permits, the engineering plans, designing the landscape and overseeing the development of the park.

Ms. Stern advised the Foundation requires a letter from the Town saying they would provide the land, photographs of the site, a description of what is in the immediate vicinity of the site and that we would sign off on the dotted line that the Town would be responsible for the maintenance of it.

Ms. Burke advised they have been working with Mr. Bill Dalton, a retired landscape architect who was present to share his ideas for the Cancer Survivor Park.

Mr. Bill Dalton stated he sees the Cancer Survivor's Park as being a very peaceful and serene park. I would like to make this park very understated.

Councilman Williams asked if the Town of Hilton Head Island would be responsible to pay the cost of the site plan up front before it goes to the Foundation. Mr. Dalton thought that if the Foundation approves what we submit, then the money will come right away. The Foundation first has to approve the land and once that's done, then we submit a proposal.

Chairman Safay stated in the meantime, the cost of the proposal would be advanced by the Town. Mr. Dalton stated that if he was chosen to do it, he would do it and then take it retroactively from the Foundation when the money came in.

Mayor Peebles said he has been supportive of this concept from the beginning. The idea of trying to incorporate the additional property would be a good thing to do. I think there are more issues that need to be ironed out before the Town makes a commitment. What I think needs to be done is a 501C Non Profit needs to be created. I would like to see the Town lease the property for 99 years at \$1.00 a year virtually giving this property for this use only with the Town retaining the land.

Mayor Peebles stated staff knows very well that we have a 5-7 if not 10 year backlog of projects in this Town that need to be done. If all we are going to do here is put the land up and whenever we get around to it at the bottom of this list I think it would be a mistake. We can't dictate that Mr. Dalton would be the designer even though he's willing to do it for free. What I think we ought to do is let me get together with these folks as a private individual and let's brainstorm a little bit how to go forward. We can do it where the Town's commitment is to put up the land and that is where it stops except for long term maintenance of the property. The \$100,000 would be used for the maintenance. Ultimately there will be some maintenance costs to the Town. This project in my opinion ought to be done by a non-profit outside entity. That would give us the ability to move forward with the project and I am here to tell you as President of Tom Peebles Builder that I would take this on as a voluntary donated project to be the Construction Manager of the project working with the designer. What we need to do is get our act together and come back with a way that we could do this expeditiously if Council is of a mind to allow the park to be built here under those circumstances.

Councilman Williams stated he thought the Mayor's idea of setting something up and coming back with something more concrete would be very advantageous because then we have something to move forward with.

After additional discussion, Councilman Laughlin stated he is all in favor of this going forward. It is a lot to digest right now and it seems to me that it needs more work before it goes to Town Council. Councilman Williams suggested that we give the Applicants an opportunity to go back and discuss it, get with the Mayor and a key member of staff to talk about how it might work within our Town and under these conditions with the understanding that we are more than willing to look at long term leases for this site and come back in 30 days with something more concrete and go from there.

Chairman Safay stated he believes it is clear that we feel this is a commendable enterprise and think you will find a great deal of support.

- **Mitchelville Preservation Project**

Mr. Thomas C. Barnwell, Jr., Chairman of The Mitchelville Preservation Project thanked the Committee for the opportunity of allowing The Mitchelville Preservation Committee to appear before you today to make an official request of the 15 acres of land at the Fish Haul Park with an arrangement similar to what is now in existence with Honey Horn. We would also like to say that our hopes would be that if and when you make any approval we would like to consider the name change to The Mitchelville Freedom Park. The Mitchelville Preservation Project Committee has been working now for a minimum of five years and I would like to say that I have only been the Chairperson of this Committee since August, 2009. We have 17 active members of the Committee and we have advisors ranging throughout the area and some out of the Community. The Community Foundation of the Lowcountry has agreed to accept funds for us. Members of our Committee have put funds into the Community Foundation already.

Mr. Mark Baker, Wood & Partners stated they were asked by the Mitchelville Preservation Committee to assist with the development of a vision for this property. It is our hope and desire that the Committee will be able to develop an education

and interpretative site of the historic Town of Mitchelville. Some of the park elements that were to be included in the park are a Welcome Center or Meeting House, replicas of some of the residences that existed in the Town of Mitchelville, a heritage path that would include a commemorative wall and perhaps historic statues of General Mitchell and perhaps Harriet Tubman and maybe even the first Mayor of the Town of Mitchelville. Interpretative sites would be included along the heritage path that might include some of the earlier excavations that occurred with the archeology dig that has been done on this property and a period garden which would demonstrate agriculture of that area and how they lived and how they subsisted on what they grew. There would be pre-history and American Indian sites that have the opportunity to be interpreted on the property as well. Additional elements of the park were to include a school, store, open air pavilion or a theater in which performing arts for song and drama could exist. In the Committee's words, a high level goal for the park was to develop an imaginative and exciting place to inform and tell the story of the Mitchelville experiment – an experiment in freedom where Africans in America just out of slavery but not yet citizens first began to self-govern and imagine the experience and the meaning of freedom.

Dr. Ben Williams thanked the Committee for their time and stated that this idea of freedom at Mitchelville began to occur in 1862 prior to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 is an authentic American story. One could say that it represents the second wave of freedom. The mission of that freedom was to confirm all of the ideals that we have heard and experienced with Williamsburg and Plymouth. It can capture the imagination not only of our local residents, but nationally and even internationally.

Councilman Bill Ferguson stated that back in 1984 he served on a Committee which was titled the Parks & Recreation Task Force. That Committee was charged with giving the Town at that time some direction on a Park system for Hilton Head Island. The Chairman of the Committee was Charles Fraser. The Committee was represented by a cross section of Islanders. One of the recommendations that Committee made to Town Council is that land be set aside in this area to commemorate and preserve Mitchelville.

Mr. Michael Marks, President, Coastal Discovery Museum stated he enthusiastically supports the work that the Mitchelville Preservation Project and the work their Committee has done thus far. We at the Museum are very supportive of this project. Mitchelville is a story of national importance to us and it is right here on our Island. We think it has immense cultural attraction potential and is a great opportunity and our obligation to advance this program forward. We stand ready to help in any way.

Pamela Ovens, President of the Beaufort County Historical Society which was established in 1939 and is the oldest Society dedicated to the study and preservation of history in Beaufort County. We endorse the Mitchelville Preservation Project as a valuable historical record that will help in the preservation of the life and times of the African American people on Hilton Head Island. We feel that historical events helped shape the South in many ways and that tourism increases as more people visit the Low Country to study our history.

Robert Smith, President of the Heritage Library Foundation stated it was his pleasure to serve on the Mitchelville Preservation Committee and said it was a great thrill to be part of this wonderful, historical recreation and bringing the history forward.

Dr. Emory Campbell thanked the Committee for the opportunity and stated this is the real story of Gullah/Geechee people and it is right here in our home town and I am proud to be a part of this whole plan.

Ms. Mary Amonetti asked the question – if not now, then when?

Carolyn Torgerson, Community Foundation of the Low country stated The Community Foundation enthusiastically supports the Mitchelville Preservation Project and as Mr. Barnwell mentioned, the Committee has established a charitable fund within the Community Foundation to accept donations and grant dollars in support of this Project and look forward to working with them as they move forward with the Project.

Chairman Safay asked Mr. Thomas Barnwell, Jr. what the Mitchelville Preservation Committee was hoping that the Public Facilities Committee could do to further the project. Mr. Barnwell stated they were hoping that the Public Facilities Committee will make a firm recommendation to Town Council to allow Fish Haul Park to be turned over to the Mitchelville Preservation project for \$1.00/year for 99 years in the form of a lease for the development of the activities that was outlined here today.

Councilman Laughlin asked Mr. Barnwell how far they were along with a fully developed plan and fund raising and putting project management in place. Mr. Barnwell stated they have a Fund Raising Committee and their first major fundraising will be next month. The Fund Raising Committee is reviewing places where grants can be found. We have a Committee that is working on a plan. We still have work to do on it and can move as fast as practical once we know that the Town is willing to work with us.

Councilman Laughlin asked what the parameters of the project cost are likely to be. Mr. Mark Baker stated that Phase I would be in the \$500,000-\$750,000 range. If you were to build all of it, in the \$2, million to \$2.5 million dollar range.

Councilman Laughlin motioned the Public Facilities Committee recommend Town Council make some commitment to lease the park property to the Mitchelville Preservation Project contingent upon finalizing the plan and showing the financial ability to carry it out and how the project would be managed in the development and construction of it. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

**6. Adjournment:**

Councilman Williams moved to adjourn. Councilman Laughlin seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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**Karen D. Knox**  
**Senior Administrative Assistant**