

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Date: October 3, 2011

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Bill Harkins, *Chairman*; Lee Edwards; Kim Likins

Members Absent: None

Town Staff Present: Lavarn Lucas, *Fire Chief*; Brad Tadlock, *Deputy Fire Chief – Operations*; Heather Colin, *Development Review Administrator*; Teri Lewis, *LMO Official*; Jill Foster, *Deputy Director of Community Development*; Rick Arnold, *Code Enforcement Officer*; and Lynn Buchman, *Administrative Assistant*

Others Present: Captain Toby McSwain, *BCSO*; R. Wilkerson, *Palmetto Dunes Security*

Media Present: None

1. Call to Order

2. Freedom of Information Act 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. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Public Safety Committee Meeting of August 1, 2011

Motion to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2011 regular Public Safety Committee meeting was made by Kim Likins and seconded by Lee Edwards. The Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Chairman Harkins thanked Chief Lucas for clarifying the question about vehicle responses to emergency calls.

4. Unfinished Business

a. Update on Lighting Issues Discussed in June 6, 2011 Meeting

Chairman Harkins asked Heather Colin to provide background on the lighting issues in particular locations raised at a previous meeting.

Heather Colin, Development Review Administrator, explained that among other things, she is involved in reviewing and approving lighting plans submitted to the Town in connection with commercial developments. As a result of research conducted specifically concerning the Fuddrucker's/Shelter Cove Plaza area, a lighting plan drawn by Palmetto Electric was found, but such plan was never submitted to the Town for approval. The plan does not necessarily reflect what is built or constructed on the site today. She noted that Palmetto Electric typically provides such photometric plans. She further noted that the Design Review Board had pre-approved several different lighting fixtures, being the shoebox design, which is typically used in commercial parking lots. Ms. Colin pointed out that although the Land Management Ordinance does require commercial parking lots to be lit and meet the levels of the LMO, with new sites required to be in compliance; if the property is non-conforming, there is no requirement in the LMO as written today to bring it up to compliance.

In response to Chairman Harkins' inquiry, Ms. Colin explained the illumination level as shown on the lighting plan, which could be approved under the LMO. She noted the illumination levels in the LMO are derived from the Illuminating Engineering Society, with maximum levels also set, with further restrictions and regulations that lighting cannot spill over property lines and must be shielded so no beacon effect occurs, which is shown on the plan. Other matters considered as a part of the review process for submitted plans include effective placement of the lighting and suggestions based on trees and tree canopies.

Ms. Likins commented that Town Staff had delivered a similar presentation to the LMO Rewrite Committee, where a lengthy discussion ensued. Although Hilton Head Island has many grandfathered properties where the lighting is not technically up to standards in existence now, the issue of forcing lighting upgrades was discussed with the LMO Rewrite Committee. She reported that the LMO Rewrite Committee had decided to include this issue in the questions being posed to consultants for guidance.

Mr. Edwards commented that the issue with new developments appears to be too much lighting, but asked for clarification on whether the majority of the non-conforming properties are not bright enough. A discussion followed among Mr. Edwards, Ms. Likins, Chairman Harkins, and Ms. Colin as to the grandfathered properties on Hilton Head Island that could be defined as inadequately illuminated based on today's standards.

Chairman Harkins asked Captain Toby McSwain from the Sheriff's Department to comment on this from a safety standpoint. Captain McSwain reported that from his experience, the telephone calls received, and burglaries and break-ins occurring in low-lit areas, lighting would appear to be an issue. However, he pointed out that the tree canopy should also be considered, as you may have adequate lighting, but tree canopy could be keeping areas dark.

Ms. Likins reported that tree canopy was also the subject of lengthy discussion in the LMO Rewrite Committee. Tree preservation was foremost in everyone's mind when the LMO was developed, but now 27 years later, issues from the growth of all those trees have surfaced. She reported that the consultant will also be asked to assist the Town move from tree preservation to forestry management, and determine when it might be appropriate to trim extremely heavy canopies.

Mr. Edwards also commented that he would have a difficult time supporting an across the board mandate for existing businesses to bring their lighting up to code. He pointed out that tree canopies, businesses not seen from the road, and the lack of super bright commercial centers makes the Town unique. However, trimming should be permitted if the lights are being inhibited. Ms. Likins agreed that in many cases not seeing big commercial buildings is the way the Island should look, but continue to maintain a balance of safety and aesthetics.

Ms. Colin suggested that if further discussion was needed, representatives from Palmetto Electric could be scheduled to discuss technology changes, lighting options and plans. Teri Lewis, LMO Official, also suggested that Staff could work with Capt. McSwain to determine areas where inadequate lighting might be affecting the crime rate. With this information, the Staff could discuss with the businesses what the LMO allows and suggest additional lighting if needed.

Chairman Harkins agreed that if businesses are experiencing more crime incidents because of illumination issues, this could influence insurance rates as well. The Committee discussed the merits of a motion.

Ms. Likins moved to recommend that Captain McSwain and Town Staff identify areas of lighting and safety concerns and then determine the appropriateness of working jointly with Palmetto Electric and/or the business owners to encourage lighting upgrades or other solution unique to the situation, and Mr. Edwards seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

5. New Business

a. Proposed 2012 Public Safety Committee Meeting Dates

The 2012 calendar for meeting dates was approved unanimously.

b. Comments from Staff

Teri Lewis introduced Rocky Browder, the new Environmental Planner for the Town of Hilton Head Island. At Chairman's Harkins' request, Mr. Browder gave a brief outline of his background and was welcomed to his new position by the Committee members.

6. Adjournment

At 10:27 a.m. Ms. Likins moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Edwards seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Lynn W. Buchman
Administrative Assistant

Approved: October 25, 2011

Bill Harkins, Chairman