

# THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

## SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**Date:** Monday, August 6, 2012

**Time:** 5:00 P.M.

**Present from Town Council:** Drew A. Laughlin, *Mayor*; Ken Heitzke, *Mayor Pro-Tem*; George Williams, Lee Edwards, Bill Ferguson, Bill Harkins, Kim Likins, *Council Members*.

**Present from Town Staff:** Steve Riley, *Town Manager*; Greg DeLoach, *Assistant Town Manager*; Charles Cousins, *Director of Community Development*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*; Shawn Colin, *Comprehensive Planning Manager*; Jennifer Ray, *Urban Designer*; Jeff Buckalew, *Town Engineer*; Vicki Pfannenschmidt, *Executive Assistant*

**Present from Media:** Tom Barton

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### 1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Laughlin called the meeting to order at 5:00 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) NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Laughlin explained the Special Meeting was called to consider conceptual plans for Chaplin Linear Park and the Coligny District. He asked Town Council and the audience to keep in mind that the plans which were being presented at the meeting were not specific designs but concept elements only. He explained there were a number of design elements and features that could possibly go in to the final plans but that was not to be decided at this meeting. He stated an agreement was needed by Town Council on basic components to give staff direction to begin the design stage of the components in order to meeting the timeline for usage of TIF funds.

a. Consideration of a Recommendation that Town Council authorize staff to move forward with design, permitting and construction for Chaplin Linear Park based on the attached revised Concept Plan.

Jennifer Ray gave a detailed presentation of the concept for the revised plan for Chaplin Linear Park. She explained this concept plan would scale back the initial proposal and proposes a link from Shelter Cove Community Park to Chaplin Park and Collier Beach Park. Ms. Ray described the pedestrian trail in detail and the future opportunities it would provide.

Mr. Williams asked if the OCRM had reviewed and approved the trail crossing the marshland. Ms. Ray said they had been in communication with the OCRM and they are more favorable of the path crossing in another area but they are not opposed to the concept of crossing the marshland.

Mr. Harkins inquired about the section of the pathway near 278. Ms. Ray noted they would not know how close they needed to get to 278 until they got further in to the plan. She noted they had hopes to move it further from 278. Mr. Harkins stated his hopes that staff would make sure that the crossing at 278 and Singleton Beach Road

would have flexibility in the design for a future crossover bridge or tunnel crossing. He also commented on the parking area noting concerns of it intruding on future building plans. Mr. Riley explained the parking is under a power line easement and buildings could not be constructed at that location. Mr. Harkins stated he felt the conceptual plans are a move in the right direction.

Mr. Edwards expressed concerns over the usage of restrooms/changing rooms at the Collier Beach area questioning if that was a good use of funds. Mr. Riley said staff could revisit the need for changing rooms but the restrooms may be necessary considering the distance of the trail.

Mrs. Likins asked if there was any possibility to redesign the entry way to encourage people to utilize the Chaplin Beach Park entrance as opposed to the Singleton Beach Road pathway. Ms. Ray explained that staff had reviewed options and this was a scaled back plan but future phases could possibly include a plan to redesign the road.

Mr. Ferguson asked if the pedestrian usage is increased in the Singleton Beach area if anyone considered reducing the speed limit on 278. Ms. Ray noted it had not been discussed at this point but they could ask the traffic engineer to review and consider as they move forward with detail and design.

Mayor Laughlin asked for public comment.

Julie Hallquist, a resident of Singleton Place voiced her concerns about the development of Collier Beach Park and a turnaround for traffic and illegal parking blocking driveways, on the street and on vacant lots.

Jack Alderman spoke in support of the concept plan and encouraged staff to continue with the project.

Dave Ames suggested considering other criteria and encouraged staff to create memorable places compatible with Hilton Head Island's core values.

Mr. Williams expressed his support for handicapped parking in the Chaplin Park area.

Mayor Laughlin expressed his hope that the project will be done in a spectacular way and that the components, as they are added, are built to the standard Mr. Ames suggested.

Mr. Harkins moved that Town Council proceed on conceptual level as outlined today and discussed and motivated to do by comment from the audience. Mr. Edwards seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0.

- b.** Consideration of a Recommendation that Town Council authorize staff to move forward with design, permitting and construction of initial Coligny District improvements outlined in the attached Concept Plan.

Jennifer Ray reviewed the three main points that resulted from the Economic Feasibility Study which were:

1. The Town should move to install public infrastructure improvements in this district, and from a financial standpoint there is little reason for the Town to subsidize redevelopment of viable existing commercial enterprises or install public improvements that are aimed primarily to subsidize or support those commercial enterprises.

2. TIF monies available for this project are time sensitive. The fifteen year time frame for implementation expires in December of 2014 and there is a lot of work to do in this area before construction and spending those monies.
3. The initial concepts to be shared tonight do not preclude future opportunities to work with surrounding property owners, but rather they serve as a foundation to get improvements started in this area.

Ms. Ray proceeded to review the concept plan in detail. She noted that most of the improvements proposed are on Town-owned property with a few exceptions and these elements will serve as a foundation for short-term and long-term needs of the District and do not preclude other partnership opportunities at any point in the future.

Mayor Laughlin introduced University of South Carolina - Beaufort Chancellor Jane Upshaw. Chancellor Upshaw presented a power point entitled "A Vision for the Future/Town of Hilton Head Island and the University of South Carolina – Beaufort Hospitality Management Program" which highlighted the University's involvement and contribution to the area. She explained in detail the needs for a facility to house the program if developed in the Coligny District.

Further discussion entailed concerning space needs, parking and the program in general. Mrs. Likins spoke in support of the concept plan noting she felt staff took into consideration the wants and needs of the Forest Beach area residents. She also spoke in support of the Town working with USC-B to become part of the future plans for redevelopment in the Coligny District.

Mrs. Likins stated that while she knows that Council is not discussing unique elements of the Coligny plan but basic concepts she had been contacted by many constituents and residents concerning a proposal. She proceeded to read a prepared statement concerning requests she has received concerning the Town providing a facility for the Sandbox Children's Museum at the new Coligny Park. She stated she believes this is an excellent opportunity for the Town to support a public/private partnership which mutually benefits the families of the community and the businesses of the Coligny area. Her statement went on to provide detailed information concerning the operation of the Sandbox Children's Museum. She encouraged members of Town Council to join her in support this type of a project in Coligny.

Mr. Harkins spoke in support of the USC-B partnership and the potential of a Children's Museum in the area. He asked what the feedback was concerning the concept plan. Mr. Riley said he could not speak for all of the stakeholders but reviewed some of the requests and interests concerning the concept plan from various owners.

Mr. Edwards spoke in support of the USC-B partnership and stated he would like Council to explore the idea of a family component to the area. He added that he does not want to abandon the idea of a retail component facing Pope Avenue.

Mr. J. R. Richardson approached the dais and clarified the increase in parking would be on street parking.

Mr. Heitzke asked what would happen to St. Patrick's Day parade. Mr. Riley said it would be a challenge but the parade could possibly stay in the same location.

Mayor Laughlin asked for public comment.

Norm Agast, Jim Gant, Carrie Olivetti, Georgene Campbell, Ann Finn, Shannon Alford, Heather Rath and Mark Munn spoke in support of the Town providing a facility in the Coligny District area for the Sandbox Children's Museum.

Mr. Jack Daly of the Forest Beach Association spoke in favor of the Town constructing a neighborhood park in the Coligny District for the Forest Beach area.

Mr. Dave Ames spoke concerning the need for a USC-B campus on Hilton Head Island. He stated that if it going to be located in the Coligny District the building would need to be iconic because it is the gateway of the Forest Beach area. He added that he felt the building should not be a single purpose building and should have public spaces within the building that bring people into the building for reasons other than just the University.

Mr. J.R. Richardson spoke in support of the idea of USC-B having a facility in the Coligny District but expressed concern about the availability of parking. He also expressed his support for the concept plan as outlined today.

Mayor Laughlin said he felt the Sandbox Children's Museum is an asset to the community and while the conceptual framework before Council today does not include a plan for the Sandbox that does that mean it cannot be added in the future and adding it is not a decision that needs to be made at this time. He said that what does need decided is if Council likes the basic conceptual framework and does Council feel expanding the partnership with USC-B merits working towards.

Mr. Harkins moved that the Concept Plan as outlined inclusive of the Chancellor's presentation be adopted on the conceptual level and attention be paid to inspirational architecture, the adequacy of parking, the growing facility needs of this community and the value of including the Children's Museum. Mr. Edwards seconded.

Mayor Laughlin stated that he agreed with those who have advocated that anything Town Council does should live up to the Town's guiding principles which include striving for excellence in everything planned, built and maintained and whatever is done should be done as well as the Town can do it and if it takes longer to do it all, so be it. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0.

#### 4) ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Heitzke moved to adjourn. Mr. Williams seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

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Victoria L. Pfannenschmidt  
Executive Assistant

Approved:

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Drew A. Laughlin, Mayor