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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

5 Date: November 5, 2013

Time: 2:00 P.M.

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7 Members Present: Kim Likins, John McCann, George Williams

8
9 Members Absent: Marc Grant

10
11 Staff Present: Steve Riley, Greg DeLoach, Scott Liggett, Charles Cousins, Jeff
12 Buckalew, Darrin Shoemaker, Jennifer Ray, Jill Foster, Brian Hulbert,
13 Heather Colin, Shawn Colin

14
15 Others Present: Gary Kubic, *Beaufort County Administrator*, Matt Fleming, *Beaufort*
16 *County*, Bill Harkins, *Councilman*

17
18 Media Present: Tom Barton, The Island Packet

19
20 **1. Call to Order:**

21 The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

22 **2. FOIA Compliance:**

23 Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance
24 with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

25 **2. Committee Business:**

26 Chairman Likins mentioned that Councilman Grant was not present and Councilman
27 Williams would be filling in as Alternate.

28
29 • Approval of Minutes

30 ○ **September 26, 2013 Special Meeting** – Councilman McCann moved for
31 approval. Chairman Likins seconded. The Minutes were unanimously
32 approved.

33 ○ **October 1, 2013 Regular Meeting** – Councilman McCann moved for
34 approval. Councilman Likins seconded. The Minutes were unanimously
35 approved.

36
37 **4. Unfinished Business:** None

38
39 **5. New Business**

- 40 • **Resolution Requesting South Carolina Department of Transportation to Construct**
41 **Traffic Safety Improvements On and Near U.S. 278 on Jenkins Island**
42 Steve Riley advised it is recommended the Public Facilities Committee endorse the
43 Resolution in their Agenda Packets and recommend approval to Town Council. The
44 Resolution requests the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to
45 construct a variety of safety improvements on and near U.S. 278 on Jenkins Island,

46 coincident with or as soon as is practical subsequent to the completion of the Bluffton
47 Flyover Project anticipated in 2015.

48 Steve Riley stated this is a specific proposal from the SCDOT that has been developed
49 by the County in conjunction with a Consultant who has been doing some work on
50 behalf Windmill Harbour. This is something that we have previously weighed in
51 regarding improvements to this area. Council voted in opposition to a traffic light at
52 that location because of concerns of the curve and the volume of traffic. Moreover a
53 year ago when Town Council took action on the Bluffton Parkway Phase 5A and the
54 \$15,000,000 Grant to help with the flyover project, you attached several conditions to
55 that approval. One had to do with the aesthetics of the Flyover and the other was the
56 State, County and Town make their best efforts to insure the planned improvements to
57 Windmill Harbour be coordinated so as to be implemented at the same time as the
58 Flyover Project. This is coming to you at the request of the County to get your
59 endorsement as this goes up to SCDOT.

60 The recommended improvements include the construction of a new road connection
61 between US 278 and Blue Heron Point Road, with access to and from US 278 and the
62 new road connection limited to right-in and right-out movements only. The
63 recommended improvements further include the complete closure of the median
64 crossover serving Blue Heron Point Road, and the partial closure of the median closure
65 serving Windmill Harbour's front entrance and Gateway Drive, with movements
66 through the crossover limited to ingress left turns from westbound US 278 into
67 Windmill Harbour. This would also limit traffic movements to and from US 278 and
68 Gateway Drive to right-in and right-out movements as well. Additional improvements
69 recommended and requested of SCDOT in the Resolution include improvements to the
70 existing left turn lane serving the ingress left turn from westbound US 278 into
71 Windmill Harbour, the lengthening of the acceleration lane that serves egress right
72 turns from Windmill Harbour onto eastbound US 278, and the construction of an
73 auxiliary weaving lane on eastbound US 278 from Blue Heron Point Road to the front
74 entrance of Windmill Harbour.

75 Mr. Riley introduced Gary Kubic, Beaufort County Administrator who stated that
76 approximately 14 months ago a meeting was conducted with officials from the Town of
77 Hilton Head Island, SCDOT, Representatives from the South Carolina Highway
78 Commission, the County Officials, County Engineering Staff and Windmill Harbour.
79 The meeting was conducted in pursuit to several directives, all focused in on what is
80 going to happen with the Flyover completion and how that will effect public safety and
81 traffic movements in that limited corridor of space.

82 We approached the situation under the guidance of the State because we made a request
83 that a previous amount of Federal money through LCOG that was available could be
84 used for safety enhancements rather than a long term planning concept which involved
85 bridge building and a lot of interference with the marsh. The estimates were that that
86 type of project in terms of time and money several years and several million would
87 probably not occur given our current economic environment and the competition for
88 other needed projects. It is also important to keep in mind that the State Highway
89 Commission is very interested in closing all crossovers along a main line US 278.
90 Anytime you cross over and have to deal with two lanes of separate moving action –
91 one east and one west, it creates a dangerous situation for those individuals or school

92 busses in terms of crossing over. What we originally suggested and what we have
93 before you is a concept that involves the closure of the Blue Heron crossover which
94 satisfies one of the States views on crossovers and a partial crossover closing at
95 Windmill Harbour which would have a controlled left turn for westerly moving
96 vehicles. The other resulting improvements or suggestions to the State and this
97 Resolution basically condenses movements into right turns only which is something
98 that everyone has actually asked for in terms of safety considerations.

99 Mr. Kubic stated they had the ability to model these movements through their software
100 and it would be better to show you what these concepts would be like in a visual.
101 These are suggestions to the State. The County would not control the implementation
102 of the improvements. They would be done by the State. This is the first step in trying
103 to introduce to the State in contemplation of the Flyover completion the process that we
104 believe would satisfy all of the change in movements and make that area safer for not
105 only residents, but commuters and visitors as well. Mr. Kubic introduced Matt Fleming
106 who proceeded to show the improvements through their special software.

107 After the presentation, Chairman Likins told Mr. Kubic that the residents of Blue Heron
108 Point have concerns and asked him to address why these improvements would be a
109 problem for them. Mr. Kubic stated he only has talked to a handful of residents in Blue
110 Heron. Our concern is first and foremost is public safety. I recognize that you can
111 have several views as to what is best for public safety, but I will tell you universally
112 that traffic engineers do not like crossovers because it clearly is more dangerous than
113 what is being proposed. I believe the issue that I was told by the Blue Heron resident
114 who was in opposition is it would increase movements in front of their homes. I
115 haven't done any counts, but if it does, it is done because we want to minimize the
116 opportunity if school busses go through that area, if people are coming into visit that
117 they do not have to cross over. It is primarily an attempt to introduce as many right
118 hand turns, as well as have the appropriate deceleration and acceleration on that main
119 channel which is a problem. We wanted to try and find a simple approach that would
120 satisfy these movements.

121 Chairman Likins asked for public comment. Ernie Linblat of Windmill Harbour POA
122 spoke in favor of the improvements, stating they were critical safety improvements for
123 the residents and guests of Windmill Harbour.

124 Many residents of Mariners Cove Club and Blue Heron Point spoke in opposition to the
125 above improvements and stated that until recent public discussion and awareness of
126 these activities and plans, they had not been involved in the discussion whatsoever and
127 to have read about the County Resolution in The Island Packet was unnerving.

128 Councilman Williams moved the Public Facilities Committee endorse the Resolution
129 and recommend approval to Town Council. Chairman Likins seconded. Councilman
130 Williams commented that he believes the concerns on safety get addressed by the
131 design engineers as they look forward to the concept. I do not believe what we see here
132 will end up being the exact object that we get because of the engineering requirements.
133 Everyone is making comments today based on what they experience and see today.
134 You will have a steady stream of traffic coming down those roads once that Flyover is
135 done and if you think it is hard now to get across there, wait until you have traffic
136 coming down that road continuously. That is why I support this.

137 Chairman Likins stated she supports this as well as she appreciates that we are going to
138 have to have something to mitigate all of that traffic coming onto the Island. I know all
139 the questions haven't been answered. We may not all feel the solution is not exactly
140 perfect at this moment, but as Councilman Williams stated, those issues will be
141 addressed as it moves forward and as the design takes place. For those citizens who
142 have commented that they didn't feel a part of the process, please know that public
143 notices are put out and there are times for the public to come and to speak at Council
144 meetings and to voice their concerns and questions. I am sure that this was done
145 appropriately and maybe we need to work harder in the future to make sure that you are
146 aware of all of those meetings. Clearly transparency for all of us in Government is very
147 important.

148 Councilman McCann stated he would not be supporting it because I do not believe
149 there was enough community involvement based on the fact of the people that are here
150 today. This is a County function and maybe there weren't enough public hearings at
151 the County. The people in this room feel they have not been properly consulted or
152 involved, I cannot support it. The Motion passed with a vote of 2-1. Councilman
153 McCann was opposed.

154 • **Proposed Shelter Cove Community Park – Conceptual Master Plan**

155 Jennifer Ray, Urban Designer stated staff recommends the Public Facilities Committee make a
156 recommendation to Town Council to approve the Conceptual Master Plan for the proposed
157 Shelter Cove Community Park.

158
159 As you may remember in the fall of 2012, a list of proposed elements for park development
160 were brought to this Committee as well as to Town Council and was approved. As part of the
161 Mall Redevelopment, the Shelter Cove Community Park will be relocated from its existing
162 location to a larger space that is directly behind the Mall and encompasses more of Broad
163 Creek. Town Staff, the Mall developers – Blanchard & Calhoun, the Island Recreation
164 Association and Shelter Cove Harbour Company have been meeting with the members of
165 Blanchard & Calhoun Design Team, Wood & Partners to discuss the design for the community
166 park. The general principals of the park remain to be a flexible use space for day to day use as
167 well as special events – predominately passive.

168
169 The key features of the park include a park entry with water feature; a central event
170 lawn including shade structures, seating areas, and an event plaza with potential for
171 public art; a festival lawn including a playground with shade sails, restrooms, and a
172 sunset pavilion; a waterfront pedestrian promenade including arbor swings and
173 interpretive signage; picnic shelters; a performance lawn including an elevated
174 performance plaza and open air shelter; and a garden lawn with “back-of-house”
175 staging.

176
177 Directly behind the water feature and event line is a proposed pier. We have been to
178 OCRM and talked about the addition of a pier. The Conceptual Master Plan that was
179 included in the Development Agreement that was approved by Council showed a much
180 shorter pier with a large pavilion at the end. It was in the 300-350 foot length and then
181 20-30 feet wide with a large covered pavilion at the end. In meeting with OCRM, we
182 have been informed that to put something out there it has to be a water dependant use.
183 Just going out over the mud flats across the marsh is not water dependent in their
184 definition of the terms. To meet that requirement, we would be required to build a pier

185 that is more in the range of 800-850 feet long. It has to go all the way out to hit where
186 there is enough water to be considered a channel. There is a definition as to how wide
187 and how deep it has to be to be considered water dependent. We have also been
188 informed that something 25-30 feet wide is probably unlikely to be approved. It shades
189 too much of the grasses under it. They want the width to be narrower so that sunlight
190 can still get into the grass that is underneath the boardwalk itself.

191
192 There have been a lot of discussions back and forth with the Design Team and the
193 Developers and staff about what direction we should go. We would love to hear your
194 comments on this as you considering forwarding this on to Town Council. The
195 Development Agreement called for a budget of \$4,500,000. This dock is in the
196 \$1,500,000 range if it goes out to the 800-850 feet range. That fits within the budget
197 right now. Up for consideration could be eliminating the dock and building something
198 else, pushing for a shorter dock or moving forward with the dock that is permissible
199 which is shown here on this plan.

200
201 Councilman McCann asked whether the pier is 800 feet or nothing. Jennifer Ray stated
202 that in speaking with OCRM we have been directed that it has to be a water dependent
203 use. If it is going to be on access in this location it comes in around 800 feet to get to
204 meet the definition of water dependent use. Councilman McCann also questioned the
205 width. Jennifer Ray stated they would push for as large as they can but we think 20 feet
206 at a minimum is needed based on the amount of users that will be out there.

207
208 Councilman Williams didn't think that people would actually use it very much at that
209 length. I think we need to see what we can do to work with OCRM.

210
211 Councilman McCann questioned the maintenance on an 800 foot pier. The pier is 1/3
212 of the cost of the whole project and how much more on top of that is the annual
213 maintenance. Jennifer Ray stated that an 800 foot pier would be very expensive to
214 maintain and there will have to special provisions relative to fire safety and getting
215 access out there. Councilman McCann stated it was a beautiful park but thought that
216 before it goes any further it should go back to the design people and find out what is
217 happening with the pier. You are asking us to recommend something where 1/3 of the
218 cost is still unknown. It is hard for me to say this is good and recommend it on when
219 1/3 the cost is still unknown.

220
221 Chairman Likins agreed the pier is very concerning and cannot imagine spending so
222 much on the pier and what the long term maintenance would be. I think about safety
223 issues also. I think that if we are convinced that OCRM is not going to allow us to do
224 anything shorter then we need to probably go back to the design people and say what
225 else can we do. I am not ready to spend this much money and then maintain this
226 structure for here to eternity.

227
228 After considerable discussion regarding the length of the pier and whether to try and get
229 it shortened or potentially doing without it, Councilman Williams moved the Public
230 Facilities Committee recommend to Town Council they move forward the Proposed
231 Shelter Cove Community Park Conceptual Master Plan with the understanding that

232 they fight for a shorter pier of approximately 200 feet. Councilman McCann seconded.
233 The motion unanimously passed.

234

235 **6. Adjournment:**

236 Councilman Williams moved to adjourn. Councilman McCann seconded the motion. The
237 meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

238

239 Respectfully Submitted,

240

241

242

243 **Karen D. Knox**

244 **Senior Administrative Assistant**