

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Date: November 3, 2014

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Marc A. Grant, *Chairman*; John J. McCann and Bill Harkins, *Council Members*

Members Absent: None

Town Staff Present: Greg DeLoach, *Assistant Town Manager*; Brian Hulbert, *Staff Attorney*; and Lynn Buchman, *Senior Administrative Assistant*

Others Present: Kim Likins, *Council Member*; Capt. Joey Woodward, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; Kiera Morris, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; and Eleanor O'Key, *Lowcountry Inside Track*

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 September 8, 2014

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2014 meeting of the Public Safety Committee was made by Mr. Harkins and seconded by Mr. McCann. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

4. Unfinished Business

None

5. New Business

a. Proposed 2015 Public Safety Committee Meeting Dates

A motion to approve the 2015 meeting dates included in the agenda packet was made by Mr. Harkins and seconded by Mr. McCann. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

b. 3rd Quarter 2014 Crime Statistics – Capt. Joey Woodward

Capt. Joey Woodward, of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, presented a PowerPoint outlining the detailed crime statistics for the 3rd quarter of 2014, as cited in the Uniform Crime Report, which is included in the agenda packet.

He reviewed the 3rd quarter 2014 statistics for Crimes Against Persons, noting there were no murders and 2 forcible rapes involving friends, with no warrant being issued by the judge on one, and the other being still under active investigation. Chairman Grant inquired about the murder that occurred in Palmetto Dunes, and while this did not occur in the 3rd quarter, Capt. Woodward indicated there has been an arrest in this case. Statistics for Crimes Against Property were reviewed, and Capt. Woodward reported arrests of 3 individuals have been made and confessions obtained for approximately 70% of the crimes that had occurred on the south end of Hilton Head Island. Details of the vehicles collisions were reviewed, with no fatalities reported.

Capt. Woodward outlined the traffic and criminal tickets and warnings issued by the patrol, traffic team, and marine patrol. As requested by the Committee, details of the marine patrol activity so far in 2014 were presented.

The volunteer hours were reviewed for the reserve deputies and volunteers. Capt. Woodward also noted that included in the Report is a breakdown of the Calls for Service so far in 2014.

Chairman Grant and Capt. Woodward discussed the increased vehicle collisions that had occurred on Arrow Road, but other than having officer presence there and speed limit signs, Capt. Woodward noted those are congested areas during the summer where accidents will occur. Capt. Woodward explained that Walmart shoplifting arrests accounts for the crimes against property reported in the Pembroke Drive area. In response to Chairman Grant's inquiry concerning bicycle incidents occurring in the 3rd quarter, Capt. Woodward indicated there had been none reported.

Mr. Harkins congratulated Capt. Woodward on the apprehension of the 3 individuals in the South Forest Beach area. Capt. Woodward noted most of the offenders are not from the area, and the word has gotten out that arrests will be made for such crimes. He noted that vigilance is still needed from residents in locking doors.

Chairman Grant acknowledged the presence of security from Port Royal Plantation and Palmetto Dunes and asked for any comments, but there were none from the public. He thanked Capt. Woodward for his report.

Frank Babel reviewed with the Committee the incredible success biking has been in the last few years, with the number of people on bicycles having doubled, with new businesses created, and the fact that biking is rivaling golf as a recreation that is available to people of all ages and abilities. He applauded the tremendous job the Town has done in supporting the bicycling program by building pathways, installing safety operations, and assisting with the Bike Advisory Committee.

Mr. Babel reviewed statistics on collisions between bikes and cars from 2008 through 2014, noting that in 2011 when the Town became a Bike Friendly Community and mitigations were put in place, collisions decreased by 38%. He explained that bike collisions are rising again as biking is increasing.

Mr. Babel stated the CIP has no budgeted money designated for pathways for the next 5 years, and he recommended a safety fund be set up with \$500,000 per year so that the Bike Advisory Committee could work with the Town to identify areas where safety and access problems need to be addressed. He asked the Committee to consider the CIP during their upcoming workshop.

He encouraged the Committee to ask for an annual report from the Bike Advisory Committee about bike safety. He suggested data from the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, the Fire Rescue EMS reports, and the Hospital ER should be reviewed to determine what is causing the collisions to avoid future fatalities and make the community safer for bikers.

He suggested funding should be provided to increase signage on the pathways, both directional and safety oriented; provide an increased enforcement presence during the summer; to continue building our pathway system; to undertake a study of the number of stop signs vs. yield signs; for improvements to the pathway crossing Shelter Cove Lane; and a connection to the sidewalk from Mathews Drive that ends prior to the Shelter Cove area to provide a seamless western approach. Mr. Babel suggested that the Committee discuss these matters at its workshop in December and establish priorities.

Mr. McCann asked that Mr. Babel put together a report of the items he mentioned, including recommendations, to discuss with other Council members. Mr. Harkins thanked Mr. Babel and noted that one of the reasons the Town is so successful is the strong volunteer effort from bikers like him, and he suggested an outline for the report to include a documented number of bikers, to share the accident data by sources, identify hazards, suggest solutions, and provide an estimated cost. Mr. McCann also asked that the report include the number of bikers and accidents along with the increase in tourism for that period, which Mr. Harkins acknowledged would establish a ratio.

Capt. Woodward advised the Committee that over the last few months the Sheriff's Office has obtained a few bikes that will be used in the spring and summer in areas identified with problems.

Diane Fornari, a resident of North Forest Beach, voiced her concerns about posted speed limit signs approaching the Coligny Circle and along Lagoon Road that she considered dangerously high for pedestrians and bikers. She illustrated her point with a map of the Coligny area and the current posted speed limits. She pointed out various pedestrian crosswalks, parking lot and business entrances and exits, and on-street parking along North Forest Beach Drive that make the posted speed limits excessive and highly dangerous during tourist season. She asked that the Committee recommend to Town Council that the situation be investigated and the speed limit be reduced to 20 MPH.

Mr. McCann thanked Ms. Fornari for expressing her concerns, and a discussion followed among the Committee members and Greg DeLoach, Assistant Town Manager, concerning the procedure to be followed for changing speed limits. Since these are State roads, Mr. DeLoach noted the Town must make a request to DOT for any speed limit change and request that an evaluation be made of the particular roads to determine the appropriate speed limit. In response to Chairman Grant's inquiry, Mr. DeLoach acknowledged that residents in the area had requested additional signage warning pedestrians, which has been done, but no request was made to address the speed.

Following further discussion, Mr. McCann made a motion that the Committee recommend to Town Council that a speed limit study be requested from SCDOT as soon as possible for the North and South Forest Beach and the Pope Avenue area for the safety of area residents. Mr. Harkins seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

6. Adjournment

At 10:38 a.m. Mr. Harkins moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. McCann seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Lynn W. Buchman
Administrative Assistant

Approved by:

/Approved April 6, 2015
Marc A. Grant, Chairman