

SURFSIDE BEACH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES REGULAR MEETING MARCH 27, 2018 • 6:30 P.M. TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Town Council Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER. Mayor Childs called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Childs, Mayor Pro Tempore Ott, and Councilmembers Courtney, Johnson, Pellegrino, Samples, and Stevens were in attendance. A quorum was present. Others present: Town Clerk Herrmann; Finance Director King; Fire Chief Otte; Planning, Building & Zoning Director Morris; Police Chief Hofmann; Public Works Director Adair, and Events Supervisor Ellis.
- 2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. A. Invocation: Reverend Kirk Lawton from Ocean Lakes Campground Ministries gave the invocation. B. Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Childs led the Pledge.

Mayor Childs recognized the candidates for the April 3, 2018 General Election: Cabel Young, Debbie Scoles, Bruce Dietrich, Tim Courtney and David Pellegrino were present.

- **3. AGENDA APPROVAL.** Mr. Ott moved to adopt the agenda with an amendment to reverse the order of Items A and B under communications so that the employee award would be first. Mr. Stevens second. All voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- 4. MINUTES APPROVAL. Vision Workshop February 22, 2018 and Regular Meeting March 13, 2018. Mr. Stevens moved to adopt the February 22, 2018 vision workshop minutes and the March 13, regular meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Johnson second. All voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED
 - 5. PUBLIC COMMENTS. Agenda Items Only. (3-minutes per speaker)
 - Mr. Bert Krassin, 13th Avenue South, supported taking over South Poplar Drive.
 - Mr. Cabell Young, 15th Avenue South supported taking over South Poplar Drive.
- Ms. Mary Kiley, Melody Lane, asked the council if other state roads in town would also be taken over, because there were problems on those roads, too, particularly Hollywood Drive.
- Mr. Nick Delaplane, 13th Avenue North, believed the town should contact the Department of Transportation and get the stop signs approved so that the road does not have to be taken over by the town.
 - Ms. Nancy Roper, 14th Avenue South, supported taking over South Poplar Drive
- Ms. Tabitha Mull, 13th Avenue North, chair of the Keep Surfside Beach Beautiful (KSBB) wanted council to appoint Nancy Roper as a committee member, and thanked the committee members and council for their support. The committee is hosting an event that includes all town committees on April 12th.
- Ms. Sue Fair, 5th Avenue North, said for five years she has been trying to get stop signs on 5th Avenue North, but drivers continue to speed down that road. It needs stop signs.
 - Ms. Rene Blackwell, 14th Avenue South and Poplar, supported keeping the stop signs.
- Ms. Meg Perrino, Cedar Drive North supported keeping the stop signs, and taking whatever action necessary to protect our children. She thanked Mr. Adair for adding more "Children at Play" signs, and KSBB for having residents encourage installing additional signs to help slow down speeds. Officer Miller assisted with two traffic studies on Cedar Drive North which is another road on which drivers speed. She supports any safety measures that can be implemented.
 - Mr. Don Reed, 16th Avenue South, said that it was said that the proposed increase in the Mayor's salary,

"that the whole thing smells like old fish." A political wage increase always brings out talking points that they don't deserve it; they are greedy, and there are more important reasons to spend the money. It is interesting that the three dissenting votes for the mayor's raise were the same members that voted to terminate the town administrator and deputy administrator. That action is costing the town at least \$55,000. He supported the increase because it was based on the recommendation for the increase in 2006, which sets the salary in line with other cities with similar budgets

6. COMMUNICATIONS.

Items A and B were reversed, see Agenda Approval #3, above.

- **B. Employee Awards: Police Captain Arron Miller, 20 years.** Captain Miller received a standing ovation as he accepted congratulations from Mayor Childs, Police Chief Hofmann, and former chief Rodney Keziah, under whom he served.
- **A. Grant Writing Program, Ms. Holly Watson.** Ms. Watson gave a PowerPoint that outlined the success she had as a grant writer and her expertise.

B. Department Reports.

- i. Events. Supervisor Ellis presented the written report, a copy of which is attached hereto. Ms. Ellis asked concurrence for a food vendor to park on Surfside Drive in the two-hour parking on the Farmers Market days. After discussion, Council CONCURRED that the vendor could park along with the other vendors on Willow Drive.
- **ii. Finance.** Director King presented the written report, a copy of which is attached hereto. Ms. King reported that in November the town was reimbursed insurance proceeds for the embezzlement loss of \$45,000, less the deductible.
- **iii. Fire.** Chief Otte presented the written report, a copy of which is attached hereto. There was a discussion about the response to the Pickled Cucumber fire. Chief Otte responded and explained that the fire was under control within minutes. He stood behind his staff's decisions. He acknowledged that the department is understaffed according to NFPA (National Fire Protect Association) standards, but the town's volunteers compensate for the shortage.
- iv. Planning, Building & Zoning. Director Morris presented the written report, a copy of which is attached hereto. Ms. Morris explained the planning commission mission would be rescheduled for later in the month, because the map making machine was done and a presentation the commission requested for the entertainment district could not be completed, which would be discussed at that meeting. Ms. Morris said 150 "Open for Business" brochures are being reordered. The former administrator directed that the other brochures be recycled after the department relocated to town hall. Ms. Morris explained in response to questions: resident may have recreational vehicles parked in the yards, but they are not allowed to live in them; to the best of her knowledge, the matter of 611 1st Avenue North is the only case being adjudicated in court; emergency air conditioning and heating repairs can be made on weekends without penalty as long as the contractor gets the permit following the repair; when a new business opens there is a \$75 inspection fee; there are no fees to inspect a vacant building for sale, and that there have never been fees related to temporary power permits. After discussion, Council CONCURRED to reimburse the five temporary power permit fees that were collected. Mr. Ott volunteered to serve on the Flood Plain Management Committee that was mentioned in the report. Council CONCURRED. Ms. Morris reported that Governor McMaster had signed legislation stating the jobs involving less than 5,000 square feet are no longer required to have engineered plans.
- **v. Police.** Chief Hofmann presented the written report, a copy of which is attached hereto. It was reported that the town is the State's third safest city, which was attributed to the police department's efforts. Chief Hofmann responded to a question that there are three officers on night shift; but the number may vary on other shifts.

- vi. Public Works. Director Adair presented the written report, a copy of which is attached hereto. Mr.
 Adair reported that the handicap access ramp will be finished this week. He thanked Myrtle Beach Lumber, Oslin
 Construction, and Surfrider Foundation for assisting with the project by either donating supplies or time. More
 accessible ramps are desired throughout the town. Mats upon which wheel chairs can travel were discussed, but they
 would not stay in place during high tide. In response to a questions, Mr. Adair said yard limbs must be cut to four
 feet or less, but leaves do not have to be removed, and contractors are required to haul away debris. When the pier is
 demolished, the wood will be preserved for use or sale.
 - C. Administrator's Report. Mayor Childs called for concurrence to appoint Director King as Interim Administrator during Mr. Duckett's medical absence. Council CONCURRED; however, no disciplinary action was to be taken without Town Council approval.

7. BUSINESS.

- A. Second Reading Ordinance #16-0829 to accept South Poplar Drive from Surfside Drive to Melody Lane from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT), Councilmember Courtney. Mr. Ott moved to adopt reading of Ordinance #16-0829 as presented. Mr. Stevens second. The decision paper and ordinance copies are on file. After a lengthy discussion, all members voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED. Mr. Adair was directed to submit the application to DOT.
- **B. Second Reading Ordinance #18-0866 to amend Section 2-20(a)(1) Mayor's Salary.** Ms. Samples moved to approve second reading of Ordinance #18-0866 as presented. Mr. Johnson second. Copies of the decision paper and ordinance are on file. After a brief discussion, Mayor Childs and Councilmembers Johnson, Pellegrino, and Samples voted in favor. Mayor Pro Tempore Ott and Councilmembers Courtney and Stevens voted against. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- C. Second Reading Ordinance #18-0867 to amend Section 4-29-2 Declining Business License Rates, Director King. Mr. Stevens moved to adopt second reading of Ordinance #18-0867. Mr. Johnson second. Ms. King presented the decision paper and ordinance, copies of which are on file. After a lengthy discussion, all voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.
- **D. First Reading Ordinance #18-0868 Overlay District, Director Morris.** Mr. Courtney moved to approve first reading. Mr. Ott second. Ms. Morris presented the decision paper and ordinance, copies of which are on file. Mr. Pellegrino recused from this matter, see recusal attached to these minutes. After a lengthy discussion, Mayor Childs, Mayor Pro Tempore Ott, and Councilmembers Courtney, Johnson, Samples and Stevens voted in favor. Councilmember Pellegrino recused. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- **E. Resolution #18-187 to Abandon Right-of-way 10th Avenue South, Director Morris.** Ms. Morris presented the decision paper and resolution, copies of which are on file. Ms. Samples moved to adopt Resolution #18-187 as presented. Mr. Stevens second. After a brief discussion, all members voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- F. Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendation for Fire Department Beach Rescue Vehicle, Chief Otte. Mr. Courtney moved to approve the Accommodations Tax Committee's recommendation as presented. Mr. Johnson second. Chief Otte presented the decision paper and committee's resolution, copies of which are on file. After a brief discussion, all members voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.
- G. Keep Surfside Beach Beautiful Committee Appointment (1 Vacancy) Ms. Nancy Roper. Mr. Stevens moved to appoint Ms. Nancy Roper to the Keep Surfside Beach Beautiful Committee. Mr. Ott second. All voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

8. TOWN COUNCIL DISCUSSION.

A. Town Council Budget Committee, Councilmember Pellegrino. After a brief discussion, Council CONCURRED to form a budget committee to be comprised of the Council Finance Subcommittee and citizen

volunteers. Mr. Pellegrino was asked to work with staff to develop a recommendation for the committee's scope, etc.

B. Fire Department SAFER Grant, Councilmember Courtney. After a lengthy discussion about cost to the town as the 3-year grant runs its course, Chief Otte was directed to seek more volunteers.

C. Keep Surfside Beach Beautiful Budget, Councilmember Courtney. Mr. Courtney said the committee is doing a lot of good work and needs funding. Mr. Adair said funds for hanging baskets and flowers for the beds around town are in his budget. The administration budget has funds budgeted for committee expenses.

D. Any matter of concern or information to be discussed by Town Council.

Mr. Stevens relayed an email communication from a concerned citizen about building heights in the C3 district or entertainment district, specifically that property owned by a local realtor would be developed into a high rise. He met with two realtor to find out what their plans are for the entertainment district. The plans do not involve a high rise. The information was a bad rumor.

Mayor Childs was incredulous that someone would spread a stupid rumor in town. (Laughter.)

Mr. Courtney was concerned about the halfway houses that are now located in town. He understands they are protected, but believes a dialogue should be established between management and the town.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS. General Comments. (5-minutes per speaker)

Ms. Patricia Magliette, Harbor Lights Drive, thanked Mr. Courtney for information on the rehab houses and asked if there was a limit to the number of halfway homes allowed in town. She was not biased against recovery homes of any kind, but was concerned because in her opinion, these were businesses, not family homes. She wanted to hear more about this in the future. She did not support anyone that didn't support police and fire. The town has been paying lawsuits, but we can't afford firemen or to give a raise to our policemen. We need to respect our committees' work and don't ignore them. She opposed submitting a resume to serve on a voluntary committee. Not one of the councilmembers responded to or commented about Ms. Watson after her grant presentation, which in her opinion was a wonderful offer.

Mr. Tom Dodge, 8th Avenue South, thanked Ms. Magliette for her comments. He wanted council to consider Ms. Watson to write grants. She will get the job done. He thanked Ms. King for filling in as administrator, and Mr. Courtney for telling about the rehab houses. Nobody else mentioned them; neither the former administrator nor deputy administrator mentioned them either. Mr. Duckett indicated he did not know about them, and Chief Hofmann appeared not to know about them. Residents should've been made aware of the houses to protect their children and property. The news reported today that 101 people died in Horry County in 2016 of drug overdoses; there are probably more in 2017. We don't need this in our town. I believe Mr. Pellegrino should have kept the ideas he heard from constituents while campaigning until after the election, because he denied other members the same opportunity to say something. I've never seen council campaign as a team. If you can't do the job on your merit, don't run. The team concept in politics stinks.

Mr. Steve Douglas, 14th Avenue South, said I was a cop in a tourist town in California. If tourism is how you make your money, people have to feel safe. Nobody wants to bring their family to a place that has drunks and idiots running around. There are rehab houses everywhere, especially in today's world. I laugh when I tell my friends in California how low our property taxes are here. It's time they go up, because three people on a graveyard shift on a busy weekend is not only ridiculous, it's unsafe. Waiting for backup to arrive is the longest five minutes of your life when you're in a fight. I don't have problem with raising property taxes to fund the police raises. I venture that most people in town won't have a problem with that.

Ms. Sue Fair, 5th Avenue North, thanked council for considering stop signs on 5th Avenue North. If the town has to take a portion of 5th Avenue North from the state, perhaps east of Cherry and west of Hollywood, that's all we need. The police deserve a raise, and we need more firemen. Turnover is a big thing, so make a deal to make them stay for more than five years.

223 224 225

226

227

228

229

230

231

232233

234

235

236

237

238 239

240 241

242

243

244

245

246

247

248

249

250

251

252

253

254

255

256

257

258

259

260 261

262

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270

271 272

273

274

275

276

277

278

Mr. Don Reed, 16th Avenue South, said he must say to council that there are consequences to past actions. We are on our third appointed interim administrator; we're hiring an administrator, and we're paying a former administrator. This should never happen again. I hope you've learned a lesson, and take care of personnel matters privately. I again request that Town Council release to the public the cost incurred as a result of their abuse of power when the four councilmembers voted to terminate the town administrator and deputy administrator. She got a nice package at the taxpayer's expense. If procedures had been followed there would be no lawsuits, because there would be documentation of just cause to terminate legally. I am amazed that no one else in this room has demanded complete transparency as I have.

Ms. Meg Perrino, Cedar Drive North, said I don't understand why this is the first time we've had recovery houses in our town. The men's house is two blocks from the Floral Clubhouse. Its residents include a felon (armed robbery), but I'm pretty sure that would make me uncomfortable. Who invited this into our town, and decided to put them within two blocks of our children's parks? I'm very upset about this, because of my sisters; please do not allow any more of these businesses in residential areas.

10. TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS.

Mr. Stevens said regarding the halfway houses that when I found out about them, I started investigating. I have information if anybody wants it. Gardner, North Carolina was fined \$9,000 for the government, because it didn't want to allow a halfway house in their town. There are other cases, too. We can't keep them out, but should be able to control how many there are in town. I think Town Council owes the citizens to pass an ordinance that says no more than two; a female house and a male house. The gang of four voted against me tonight. A few years ago, the gang of four voted and we will \$760,000 back from the state that was spent on an illegal document signed by councilmembers. Mayor Childs (gavel), you don't have to yell. Mr. Stevens, yes, we had an administrator that lied to me for 7½ months by not telling me about a lawsuit that I should've known about or a court decision that cost us \$1.26 million without it being on the agenda. Are these reasons to get rid of people? I don't have any regrets about my decision. Tonight we voted to repay permit fees that were not approve by council. I voted against the mayor's raise. The election is next Tuesday. You can't complain unless you vote. The polls open at seven and close at seven. You can vote absentee at Horry Elections office in Conway until Monday at five o'clock. Hopefully, we're going to get the overlay ordinance adopted. I'm glad we have the third safest town in the whole state. I support the police; support the fire, and I support public works. This is a fantastic town. We've got a lot of great citizens, and that's why I supported Mr. Pellegrino's budget committee suggestion. Ms. Watson gave us an opportunity. She is going to get grants and we don't have to pay her until she gets them. The KSBB gets out and works to make the town look good, and they're going to have an internetworking meeting for everybody. This is a wonderful this town. It's going to sponsor "A Wonderful Life" during Christmas. Highway 17 is going to be paved by the State, not the town. Thank y'all and have a good week, and don't forget to vote.

Mr. Pellegrino said thanks for coming tonight. In response to the resident's comment, I brought the budget committee up because we're in a budget cycle. It's something that can help us even this year, because the budget will be passed in a few months. It was not a political thing. I know as fact that two of the people that gave me excellent ideas and who could be very helpful on this committee, I'm pretty sure they are not voting for me. It was a timing thing, because we have the budget coming up. Miss Watson, thank you for your presentation. We have a budget meeting coming up, and certainly will consider that. That's certainly a way to get some extra federal income for the town. I do support raises for the police department. We have to carve out money so we can at least compete better with Myrtle Beach so we can maintain our police officers. Two and half years ago, I was very supportive of an increase for officers on the lower levels. That is something we have to do. Regarding the fire department that's much more difficult. That's a huge, huge lump of cash. We do want to safe town; we do have a safe town. Chief Hofmann stated that we went from 48th in the state to 3rd safest. That's pretty good stats and from the standpoint of the fire department, we respond well to calls. I understand staffing is probably not ideal. Mr. Courtney explained our gaps, but we get help from mutual aid. That's something we need to address in the future, but can't get everything you want right now. That brings me back to revenues. The declining business license rates ordinance will impact 53 companies. Only four companies will benefit from the higher grossing discounts. On past the town limit of Surfside toward 544 there are some pretty high revenue businesses, including McDonald's, which could bring new revenue to this town. There's opportunities out there; we just need to choose to go that direction. Thank you very much for coming. Thanks for your comments. Have a great week.

Mr. Ott said I would like to see this council have a workshop with the owners and operators of these halfway houses. I've been told you're not going to remove them, but we need to tell them what our rules are and they need to tell us what the rules are. We need to negotiate with these people and have our police chief in the meeting, and hold the meeting in public. Mrs. Watson did a good job and she needs to continue to show us what the sliding scale of how payment will be done. I'm asking the clerk to put this under council discussion for the next meeting. What KSBB has done is visually apparent. They've worked hard. We continued to deal with transparency. If you haven't been here long enough, you don't know anything about the many lawsuits that we've been through. We just relieved them of their duties and responsibilities; they weren't fired. We don't want any more black eyes on the town. I appreciate everybody that comes out here and speaks. We are town community that works together. Thank you very much. Thank you Ms. King for acting as administrator. Ms. King said during the last two weeks without Mr. Duckett, we have all worked really hard together as a team and will continue to do so. Mr. Ott said the town's staff is the best. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Courtney said I've been harping on police and fire for two years. If we hired a few guys at a time over the years, we wouldn't be here today. Chief Otte actually suggested the grant. We can't run away from this problem. A day is coming when these guys retire and we will be down to one firefighter. Regarding revenue, yes, I'm hoping we can do well with the pier. I hope that the overlay will help us bring businesses here and keep tourists in town. Is annexation the solution? I don't believe so. I moved here for the Town of Surfside Beach. I'm tired of hearing about the gang of four. We are a council form of government. We can't speak about personnel matters. If you only knew what was behind the curtain. You didn't lose any money. Trust me, you saved money. I know I did my job to the best of my ability. I took an oath and the oath was to work as council. Four members made a decision to move forward. I know the ones that speak from the heart, and not read off a paper. Ms. Watson, I appreciate you coming out. Anybody that can get us grants, I'm all for it. We have a lot about \$7 million in capital projects that need to be done and we need a grant writer. Whether I win re-election or not, I will continue to work for the residents. Thank you. Have a good night.

Mr. Johnson said thank you all for coming out. I really do appreciate it. He asked the clerk to get copies of Ms. Watson's presentation, because it was done quickly. Regarding lawsuits and paying out money, we have insurance, and many times insurance will settle instead of going to court. We don't have a lot of say in that regard; sometime we don't want them to settle, but we have no say in that regard. The majority of the time the insurance company settles and it doesn't cost us any money, except for an increase in premiums. Thank you all for coming out. Thank you councilmembers. I appreciate all of our staff. They do a great job. Thank you.

Ms. Samples said first I want to thank staff. I appreciate you being here at 10:30 at night. So sorry you have to be here again early in the morning. We appreciate you so much. Our fire department is running beautifully and if the chief thinks we need an extra firefighter, he should ask for him. Six more firefighters in the town of this size is over the top. We had no issues. Ms. Watson, very good presentation. Thank you so much. The only question I have for you is, based on doing government contracts for many years, I don't believe you can pay someone commission or a contingency from grant proceeds. That could have changed, but that needs to be discussed. I encourage you and anyone else who has information that can assist the town in getting grants to do so. Mr. Reed, I agree with a lot of what you said that you said, but you would have to FOIA (request pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act) that information. A lot of personal information is not available through FOIA. I'm not sure how we can help you, but I would encourage you to talk to Ms. King. Raising the mayor's pay is not about this mayor, but it is about the position and was long overdue. I'm glad council had the foresight change the pay on that position. The election is a week from tonight. Please go vote. The last thing is people in recovery are not bad people. We have to acknowledge that. We have to educate ourselves. None of us necessarily want a sober living house next to us. None of us really want that, but there's only so much we can do about it. We certainly have to recognize that not all these people are bad people. They're in recovery and that it wouldn't be so bad for them to have some support. Working together as a community and caring about our neighbors is really what the priority is for me. I plan to offer any assistance that I can to make it a harmonious living community for all of us. I think that's what's important. Thank you very much.

Mayor Childs thanked the KSBB and said I have always supported the beautification committee. I'm big on flowers and one of the workers on the present hanging basket system we have today. I would encourage you to continue planning. That's a big thing. Try not to get too diverted in other things. Keep shrubbery; keep hanging baskets, and things like that because that's the first thing people see when they come into town are the beautiful

hanging flowering basket. Where I worked before actually wrote the book on hanging baskets. If you do have a problem with funding, please don't hesitate to give me a call, and will certainly try to work through any issues. Thank everybody for coming out tonight. There's been a lot of talk a lot of talk; good conversation, and a lot to think of.

11. ADJOURNMENT. Ms. Samples moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 p.m. Mr. Johnson second. All voted in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

			Prepared and submitted by:
			Debra E. Herrmann, CMC, Town Clerk
Approved:	April 10, 2018		
			Surfside Beach Town Council
VOTE:	Yes	No	
			D. L. F. C. H. W. W.
			Robert F. Childs, III, Mayor
			Ron Ott, Mayor Pro Tempore
			Timothy T. Courtney, Town Council
			Mark L. Johnson, Town Council
			David L. Pellegrino, Town Council
			Julie M. Samples, Town Council
			Randle M. Stevens, Town Council

Clerk's Note: This document constitutes minutes of the meeting that was digitally recorded, and not intended to be a complete transcript. Appointments to hear recordings may be made with the town clerk; a free copy of the audio will be given to you provided you bring a new, unopened flash drive. In accordance with FOIA §30-4-80(A) and (E), meeting notice and the agenda were distributed to local media and interested parties via the town's email subscription list. The agenda was posted on the entry door at Town Council Chambers. Meeting notice was also posted on the town website at www.Surfside Beach.org and the marquee.