

The Town of James Island held its regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 1238-B Camp Road, James Island, SC on Thursday, July 17, 2014. The following members of Council were present: Mary Beth Berry, Mayor Pro Tem, Leonard Blank, Darren “Troy” Mullinax, and Mayor Bill Woolsey, who presided. Absent: Councilman Sam Kernodle. A quorum was present to conduct business.

Also present: Ashley Kellahan, Town Administrator, Bo Wilson, Town Attorney, Kristen Crane, Senior Town Planner, Mark Johnson, Public Works Coordinator, and Frances Simmons, Town Clerk.

Opening Exercises: Mayor Woolsey called the meeting to order. He opened in prayer and followed with the Pledge to the Flag. FOIA: This meeting was published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of James Island.

Presentation:

Gullah Cultural Center - St. James Foundation: Troy Strother, Executive Director, of the St. James Foundation, gave the background of the St. James Foundation, founded in 1998 by Reverend Charles Heyward; and the vision for a Gullah Cultural Center by a member of St. James Presbyterian Church. The St. James Presbyterian Church has made an offer for the Foundation to purchase a 9 acre tract located on Grimball Road for the Gullah Cultural Center. The Cultural building will be built on two (2) of the nine (9) acres. The remaining land will be landscaped and open to the public. There will be an interpretive walking trail tracing the history of the Gullah experience, as well as the offering of educational classes; cultural activities; the selling of local crafts, exhibits, and Gullah cuisine.

The Foundation hopes to purchase the property using Charleston County Greenbelt funds and has applied for a Grant from the rural portion of the program. The Foundation is asking the Town for \$200,000 from its Greenbelt allocation to help them with the \$900,000 purchase of the land. Mr. Strother said partners, donors, and a community loan fund, will help them build the structure. Everyone involved in the project is either from James Island, Johns Island, or one of the Sea Islands. He added that the #1 thing that draws people to Charleston is its history, and #2, is African American history. The Gullah Cultural Center will be an educational facility and will transform the lives of all people and the community; it is about a wonderful culture that has been here for hundreds of years and should be preserved.

After the presentation, Mr. Strother answered the questions that Town Council had.

Public Comments: The following persons asked the Town to support the St. James Foundation’s request.

Reverend Charles Heyward, 538 Clear View Drive, James Island
Nathaniel Backman, 1441 Fort Johnson Road, James Island
Carolyn “Jabulile” White

Consent Agenda:

- a. Minutes of June 19, 2014 Regular Town Council Meeting. Approved without objection

Information Reports:

- a. Finance Report: Town Administrator, Ashley Kellahan gave the Finance Report for the period ending June 2014. We are at 105% of the revenue budget and anticipate receiving \$300,000 in additional revenue. We have received \$67,000 from the SCE&G franchise. Mrs. Kellahan stated that overall, all departmental expenditures will come in under the budget.
- b. Town Administrator Report: Mrs. Kellahan reviewed highlights from the Administrator's Report: Swearing-in Ceremony is scheduled for August 4th at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall. Representative Peter McCoy has agreed to officiate. An orientation for newly elected officials is tentatively scheduled for September 4th at 6 p.m. Bill Taylor with the Municipal Association (MASC) will conduct the training. The staff is working on an Annual Report. The Annual Report will highlight the accomplishments of each department during the past year and goals will be established for next year. Building Services: Building Inspector, Berry Rudisill attended the County's Initial Local Damage Assessment Training to learn how to assess and report damages after a disaster. He also attended the Charleston County Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning meeting. Emergency Management Services: A decision to award the contract for the Town's Emergency Management Services Plan will be presented to Council for approval at its next meeting. Code Enforcement: 17 new cases were opened in June. Safety: Mrs. Kellahan stated that SCE&G has responded to the concerns of the family (incident on Teal Avenue) and have replaced back street lighting and cut the overgrowth in the right-of-way. The family has expressed appreciation that this was done. Mrs. Kellahan announced that the City of Charleston Board of Zoning Appeals has denied the rezoning of the Shopping Center on Folly Road (location of Max and Henry). The zoning will remain as General Business.

Senior Town Planner, Kristen Crane, gave an update from the conference that she attended at the University of South Carolina on Green Infrastructure: Building Great Communities, on June 11-12.

Public Works Coordinator, Mark Johnson, gave an update on the Sweetgrass Creek Erosion project (end of Trapier Drive). He said our Engineers, E.M. Seabrook has developed the plans and the Town has received the permits from OCRM. The project will be bid to "shore" a portion of the road in danger of being undermined. Mayor Woolsey asked the estimated cost; to which Mr. Johnson answered the Engineers estimate that it could be in the range of \$30,000.

Requests for Approval:

- a. Request to Approve Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Charleston-Recreation: Mrs. Kellahan reported that programs will begin January 1, 2015. Recreation programs offered will include: football, baseball, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, softball and

cheerleading. Gymnastics, aquatics, and tennis will not be offered at this time but may be in the future.

Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion to approve; Councilman Blank moved, seconded by Councilwoman Berry. Councilman Blank commented on the relationship between the City and the Town; that this is a perfect example that we can get along. He said we wanted to pursue offering recreation programs years ago but could not because the Town was in litigation. Now that the Town is here to stay, we have pursued this. Councilman Blank said from what he understands the Mayor of the City has agreed to this. Mrs. Kellahan said after the Town signs the agreement it will go to City Council for approval. Councilman Blank said he cannot say whether or not the City will approve the agreement, but his point is that we do have some cooperation with each other. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Award of Foxcroft Road Sidewalk Improvement Project: Mrs. Kellahan reported that we received three (3) bids. The low bidder, AOS Specialty Contractors, submitted a bid of \$30,509 and has provided the necessary documents to perform the work. Mrs. Kellahan asked Council to award the contract to AOS Specialty Contractors, Inc. She said once the contract is awarded and notice given, the work should be completed within sixty (60) days. Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion to approve. Councilman Blank moved, seconded by Councilman Mullinax. No discussion. Motion approved unanimously.
- c. Request for Motion to Select Town Signage: Mrs. Kellahan gave an overview of the “Welcome to James Island” Signage. The new sign will replace the one located on Folly Road and the other on Harbor View Road. Mrs. Kellahan said she received designs and quotes from four companies; and after reviewing them, the original design stood out. Mrs. Kellahan said whatever design Town Council selects, that we vary the design with the color. She thought it would be good to have public input for the choice of color. We could place a survey on the Town’s website, such as Survey Monkey for people to make their choice. This would give the community the opportunity to be a part of something they are proud of. Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion to approve. Councilwoman Berry moved to accept the original design by Signature Signs for \$4,625; Councilman Blank seconded. Mrs. Kellahan explained that because of the Town’s Sign Ordinance, these signs would be the monument style.

Councilwoman Berry made reference to the choice of colors: blue or green. She explained that the sign was discovered in the window at Signature Signs when James Island Pride was looking for signage. She said this sign was used in the first incorporation and has history of the Town’s origin. She liked the idea of the public choosing a color and recommended that we set a time limit to receive suggestions.

Councilwoman Berry amended her motion to solicit input from the public on the choice of a color for the design; with a time limit set to receive suggestions; Councilman Blank seconded. The amended motion passed unanimously. Mayor Woolsey called for the vote on the main motion and it passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

James Island Land Use Committee: No report

James Island Environmental and Beautification Committee: Councilwoman Berry announced that James Island Pride will have a litter pickup on Saturday at 8:00 a.m. to clean Dills Bluff Road and possibly Fort Johnson. Plans are underway to participate in the Green Fair. This year James Island Pride will exhibit samples of interactive art displays made from recycled materials. Helping Hands will participate in another project in August. Councilwoman Berry noted that this program is working well and she hopes to include a core of volunteers. This announcement will be publicized so that those who want to volunteer may do so.

James Island Public Safety Committee: Councilman Mullinax announced that the Yard of the Month Program is working well. Two winners have been selected since the program was instituted. The next Neighborhood Council meeting will be Thursday, July 24 at 7:00 p.m.

Resolutions

Resolution #2014-17: Island Sheriffs' Patrol Officer of the Quarter: Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion to approve. Councilman Blank moved, seconded by Councilwoman Berry. Mayor Woolsey recognized Deputy Corey Shelton and read Resolution #2014-17. Sergeant Shawn James also recognized the accomplishments of Deputy Shelton. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution #2014-18: Partnership with St. James Foundation for Gullah Cultural Center: Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion in favor. Mayor Woolsey moved, seconded by Councilman Mullinax.

Councilman Blank commented that he had expressed his concerns earlier and felt better about it. He said that County Council will have to review this; it's not just the Town handing out money, so he will support the request.

Councilwoman Berry said our challenge with Greenbelt funds is always how best to use them. She thinks the Gullah Cultural Center would be a fantastic use of Greenbelt funds. She thinks the way Greenbelt works is our protection; if something goes wrong and it does not come to fruition, as planned, the money goes back into the Town's allocation. The risk seems minimal; she thinks they (the Foundation) are taking on a huge risk. She wishes them luck because this is an amazing concept and she hopes it will work. Councilwoman Berry offered her assistance and stated that the Town should do this.

Councilman Mullinax commented that all of the bases have been covered, and all of the potential risks have been explored. He thought that all of the speakers made eloquent points and he supports the request.

Mayor Woolsey commented that he and the Town Administrator first learned about this project on last Wednesday and were very excited because it is an excellent program. He

mentioned that he contacted Councilwoman Berry that same day because of her efforts with the Greenbelt Program, and he shared this information with Councilman Blank. Mayor Woolsey said he understands that this is short notice; however, this is a competitive process for the Rural Portion of the money and the Town would be contributing a part of its money. The St. James Foundation will have to appear before the Greenbelt Board for approval. Mayor Woolsey said supporting this project is a good idea.

Councilwoman Berry added that when this was discussed earlier she thought we needed some contingencies to protect ourselves. However, it sounds as if those contingencies are built in the way that Greenbelt works. She hopes the Town will continue to be a part of the entire island, and not be stuck behind our borders. The Town can be the cultural, aesthetic, artistic, educational, and historical leader for people who move here that may not think of themselves as “James Islanders”. She commented that this is our challenge; James Island Pride has risen to the occasion and the Town can too. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinances up for Second Reading:

- a. Ordinance #2014-09: Amend Ordinance #2013-07, Town of James Island Zoning and Land Development Regulations (Development Standards) Chapter 9, §9.11.1 Prohibited Signs; §9.11.2 Standing Signs; §9.11.4C Shared Free Standing Signs: Mayor Woolsey asked for a motion to have the second reading. Councilman Blank moved, seconded by Councilman Mullinax. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ordinances up for First Reading

- a. Ordinance #2014-08: Amend Ordinance# 2013-07, Town of James Island Zoning and Land Development Regulations (Development Standards) Chapter 9, §9.4.6 Tree Fund: Mayor Woolsey announced that Council is returning to the postponed Ordinance # 2014-08 to amend the Tree Fund. He said Council had stopped on the discussion of a proposed amendment to the main motion. Councilman Blank then stated that the amendment under §9.4.6 E currently reads: All mitigation fees collected shall be paid to the Town of James Island and placed in an account established for public beautification through the planting of trees in the Town of James Island.

Councilman Blank said his proposed amendment is to remove in the Town of James Island. He said the amendment would read: All mitigation fees collected shall be paid to the Town of James Island and placed in an account established for public beautification through the planting of trees on James Island. Mayor Woolsey said that a motion and second had been given. He asked if there was further discussion on the proposed amendment. Councilman Mullinax asked if it would be trees only; to which Councilman Blank confirmed. Mayor Woolsey added that we received an opinion from the Town Attorney stating that Councilman Blank’s amendment was in order. Mayor Woolsey called for the vote on the amendment and it passed unanimously. Mayor Woolsey called for the vote on the main motion to change the tree fund so that

it applies to all of James Island. There was no discussion. The main motion passed unanimously.

New Business: None

Executive Session: Not Needed

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Frances Simmons
Town Clerk