

## DAUFUSKIE ISLAND COUNCIL

Community Forum, Tuesday, July 21, 2020, 5:00 PM

Mary Field School

**Call to Order:** Council Chair Leanne Coulter called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM with a quorum of members present

### **Roll Call:**

Present: Leanne Coulter, Tonie Meyers, Roger Pinckney, Steve Hill, John Shatner, Kathy Aurichio, Robert Levis

Absent: None

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**General Announcements:** Leanne explained that at the Council's organizational meeting in February it was decided that community meetings would take place every other month (each odd month). The Council would continue to hold monthly planning sessions. Leanne added, of course all community members should feel free to contact council members via email, etc. at any time.

**Guest Speaker: Daufuskie Island Fire Department –Emergency Preparedness:** Shane Caparanta represented the Fire Department and Chief. He discussed several topics. In a week or two an emergency preparedness pamphlet will be placed in each mailbox. A fire prevention notice is included with the pamphlet with the recommendation that you sleep with the bedroom doors closed. The slogan is "Close before you Doze" as a safety measure. He reported a new engine for Daufuskie was purchased at a resale and this engine will serve our island better. A new one would cost \$750,000 and they were able to purchase this one for under \$40,000. The island has a Class 3 rating (range is 1-10) and having appropriate equipment aids to this strong rating. Shane also asks if you have an emergency to please call 911 – do not call the fire department or come directly to the fire department. By calling 911 an ambulance can be dispatched quickly and ready for you as well as transportation to the mainland. In addition, especially because of COVID, it is important to keep exposure down at the fire department.

### **Community Updates:**

- **Covid-19:** Guest speaker, Dr. Baum reported that on Tuesday, August 11 between 2pm-7pm there will be Covid testing available here on the island. The testing will be done at the fire station at no cost to residents. ID will be required. The goal is for everyone to be tested. An antibody test will not be available. There is a form to be completed. Forms should be filled out ahead of time. The council will let us know where we can pick up the forms. It is a simple test. A nurse will be administering. There will be translators. This will be publicized once we have all the information. It could be up to a week for results. If you are positive there will be counseling available. Dr. Baum urged everyone to continue to use masks and social distancing. Even if you have been tested before it is recommended that you get testing again.
- **Daufuskie Turtle Team:** Steve reported for Tammy an overview. It is a much slower season (100 last year – as of today 60). Just like last year about ½ the nests have been destroyed or partially destroyed by armadillos. There is discussion that a nursery might be established next year to protect all the turtle eggs.
- **County Landing Store:** Leanne reported that the new owners are encountering hurdles with DHAC. There is a technicality with the paperwork. The paperwork may take 4-6 weeks.

- **Daufuskie Island Elementary School Opening:** Leanne reported the district revised the school calendar and the opening date for school will be September 8<sup>th</sup>. Parents can request face to face learning, or they can choose the option for virtual learning. Students and teachers will wear masks and follow protocols if anyone has symptoms. The physical distancing requirement may require every other day instruction if there is a need. A question was asked about bussing.
- **Island-Wide FedEx:** Steve reported that the Daufuskie Island Ferry has initiated Fed-Ex delivery to the island. They are going to come out with a message on Next Door giving details. The ferry has started a visitor center off of 278. They have a storefront and they want to use that storefront for island use of Fed X. Island residents would be notified that a fed x is there at the landing. Residents may pick up or arrange for the captain to deliver to the Melrose. \$10 to pick up and \$20 to have brought to island.
- **Island-Wide High-Speed Internet:** Kathy reported State Rep Bradley was contacted regarding our concern students have access to quality high band internet. Hargray gave a bid and Rep Bradley has found a source for federal money. Hargray will submit an application and a contract will be awarded. Hargray will front the money and then be reimbursed. Jeff “swore” that it is a two-week process for the application and review. Kathy feels sure we will see progress within the next month. This is a big deal for our kids and this island. The state (grant money) expects Hargray to cover the entire island.

#### **Public Forum #1:**

- Question: How many students do we have at the island school? Last year we had 20. There have been some changes so the number still needs to be determined. Amanda told Roger they anticipated 32 students. Preschool testing is on hold.
- With hurricane season Shane was asked about evacuation. There is no voluntary evacuation. It is stressed that everyone leave. There will be no services available on the island if there is an evacuation.
- Question: What is the name of the person with the county general store: Charles Hudgins.

**Community Happenings:** With Coronavirus putting a damper on activity, not much occurring. Right now is the prime viewing time for viewing the comet. Northwestern Sky under the big dipper.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Planning Committee — Transportation Task Force:** Steve reported that there has been activity. Pat Allison, Dean Roberson and Steve have been working on this. Pat reported we thought initially the project would be completed by Spring 2021 but there is still some confusion of the path of the 278 widening. Some of the paths go right through Pinckney Island. The county decided rather than have a final version plan they would expedite the process and give us a temporary location by next spring. Permitting, public hearing, etc. need to take place first. The temporary facilities will have 150 spaces with a fenced in area for parking. Once the final routing of 278 is determined they will immediately start on the permanent solution concurrent with the widening. The county received \$196,000. Steve worked with Palmetto Breeze and they have applied for a \$1.2 million grant. We have not heard yet if we received.

A question was asked if there would be a stoplight. Pat said there was to be an underpass in the original plan. It was asked that they include a stoplight for this temporary arrangement and that at certain times of the day (when the ferry is in) that the other lights be turned red allowing for a better/safer exit.

**Ferry Committee:** This is the year that the ferry contract is to be renewed. Leanne has been working with Monica S. Monica is taking another position in Virginia and her work has shifted to Dave Wilhelm. Leanne will contact him tomorrow.

**Infrastructure, Environment, Easements and Roads Committee:**

- **Melrose Landing Pumps:** Roger updated us that the council has been trying for 2 years to get the Melrose tanks evacuated. Scott Smith has expertise and has drawn up a rough draft precautionary note. As soon as it is signed Roger will have more details. These tanks are out of compliance and an environmental hazard. Technically the tanks are owned by Daufuskie Embartment (which is bankrupt and gone). It was explained to Redfish that the ferry would be shut down if (and when) there were a leak.
- **Freeport Road:** There was a bad washout on Freeport. It has finally been repaired.
- **Church Rd. Fire:** Two dumpsters of debris from the fire have been removed - it will probably take one more year for this area to be clean of debris.
- **Haig Point Rd. Zoning:** Roger reported that the Scotts have a plan to dig a pond and have offered a mitigation project. Essentially once the digging is done they will complete a landscaping, fishing dock, public benches, project etc. They are also considering charging per truckload a fee that will result in charitable donations that could raise over \$70,000. The Zoning Board of Appeals has postponed the meeting for a month or two due to coronavirus and this is a good opportunity for the community to provide more input.

**Public Forum #2**

Public comment centered on the Haig Point Road Zoning Appeal. There is a proposal to initiate a sand excavation project on property along the road. Several community members spoke and Casey Scott (CS) was present to answer questions and address concerns.

Community Member (Eddie Pennebaker) stated that he and his wife live at 58 Maryfield and the project comes right up to their yard. Several reasons were put forth as to why this area is not appropriate for this project including safety issues, noise issues, and concerns that the project may not be completed. In addition there is concern of possible impact to the Gullah cemetery that is in this area. Eddie also shared his perspective of the emotional toll the project is exacting on our community. He asks the council to oppose this project.

CM 2 – RJ: Stated the land for this project borders two sides of her property and she is in favor of the fill dirt project and the pond and this area having a safe fishing place. She is using berms to diminish the sound and suggests this project does the same.

CM 3 - Freddy Grant Jr. Stated he echoes Eddie's words. He fears that the cemetery will be torn up and alligators will be everywhere.

CM 4 - Ricky: Asked is there somewhere else this project could take place.

CM 5 - Pat: Stated he does not have a vested interest. He noted that Daufuskie Island developed a plan for development eleven years ago and made changes two years ago which determines that every parcel on this island has rules and as long as someone is following the rules projects can move forward.

CM 6 - Dean: Stated that this project requires a special use permit. It must be compatible with the surrounding area. This is a residential area. He voiced concern that there has not been adequate investigation on the impact of well water. He stated that he thinks this is the wrong location and there

are potential effects on water that have not been investigated. He would like to see all the documentation and reports here on Daufuskie without having to go to Beaufort.

Casey Scott (CS): Responded that a 12-foot pond will not have any impact on the well. He reported that he had spoke to Horry Well (primary well-digger on the island) and they told him a 12 ft pond would not impact +/-

125 ft wells that are drilled into the aquifer. He reported they have gone through every permitting process they have been asked to do.

CM 7 – Julie Pennebaker asked if the landscaping would take place after the completion of the project or while the sand pit is being dug. CS: stated that the landscaping would be done after and that he wants the project done as quickly as possible. His goal is for the area to be nice and something the island doesn't really have now.

Council Member Kathy: Stated that there were to be three public meetings as required. CS: The public meetings were posted. No one showed up at the first meeting except Chief Boys and he approved the project. No one showed up at the second meeting. There has been discussion on Next Door. Tameka at Zoning (Beaufort County) will give you all the documents electronically - you don't have to go to Beaufort.

Community Member (Freddy) asked why this area?

CS: It is an 18-acre tract. It used to be pasture so there are fewer trees and there will be less impact here. We are digging a 12-foot pond. That's it. And we are going to make it into a park.

Freddy shared that he was worried about his ancestors and his ancestors in the cemetery. Casey responded that the cemetery is a ½ mile away from the project.

Community Member 8 - Stated there are a couple of issues. Noise, etc. How long will it take? You could turn the temperature down by saying 18 months, 2 years.

CS: responded that it should take two years. It could be less than two years. He added that there would be a lot of activity the first couple of months then the activity would be much less. He added that if we could take the attitude of getting things done, like drainage and the roads, and look towards fixing things rather than opposing things. He added that he understands no one wants a hole dug in his or her backyard but he is trying to make it something we can be proud of and accomplish something that the island needs.

Several other opinions were shared including that this could happen to any neighborhood. Discussion ensued of how the pond would be filled and how the water would be maintained.

Community Member 9 - John VanHorn: Stated that this is the last thing I thought we would have to do when we bought property. He asked community members to stand up at distances to show how large the project would be.

Community Member 10 - Leticia. I need to know from where to where the project will reach and if this is going to be safe for my children. CS: Responded that her home is the probably the furthest from the project. The road next to her house will not be used and there will be a fence around the project as required.

CS: stated that we will do whatever we can do to mitigate. I'm here tonight to answer questions and listen to your concerns.

Community Member 11 – Questioned the working times: 7:30 am – 6:30 pm Monday – Saturday through the life of the project. CS: Responded that 9-5 Monday – Thursday is more reasonable. We

didn't apply for those hours those hours are listed in the development code. The engineer involved applied for those hours because those are what are listed in the Development Code and they are open to more limited hours.

Community Member 12 – Jennifer asked if the project proceeds and we have a park setting what will be the plan for maintaining. CS: We have to maintain it forever as long as we own it. We will be financially obligated to maintain.

Community Member 13 – Deb Smith referred to one of her properties where a pond had formed resulting in mosquitos. CS: The area behind you is freshwater wetland and has standing water; this will not be standing water. There will be fish and moving water.

Leanne commented she felt this was a good conversation and opinions voiced and adjourned the meeting at 6:47 pm.