

Daufuskie Island Council Meeting
August 15 2017
Minutes

Roll Call

Present: Chuck Hunter, Steve Hill, Deborah Smith, Darnell Brawner, John Schartner, James Bays, Sallie Ann Robinson

Absent: Charlie Small and Maureen Devine

Pledge of Allegiance

Special Request

Ms. Smith asked that community members attending the Council meetings speak up when they provide comments in order to be heard and accurately recorded.

Committee Reports

Amenities Committee

Mr. Brawner reported that the current project is building a viewing bench at the end of Turtle Beach Road. The Fall project will be to tidy up the Beach Road gazebo area.

Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee

Ms. Robinson reported that "The park is on the way!" Located beyond the berm on Francis Jones Road; much progress has been made. The committee is looking forward to its completion so that the community can have some great events and enjoy the facility, perhaps starting with a covered dish dinner to kick off the opening of the park.

Daufuskie Island Plan and Code Committee

Ms. Smith reported that the second community workshop was scheduled for August 28th. The first one was very productive and all are encouraged to participate in the second one. The Plan and Code Committee meeting is Saturday, August 19th at 11:00 am at the Mary Fields School. The meeting is open to the public. Results of the Plan Review survey are very impressive with over 250 respondents thus far. One gratifying aspect is that the responses seem to be consistent regardless of which community the respondents are from, showing that we all seem to be united about what we value most on this island. The last day for the survey to be completed is August 22nd, and they are available in both electronic and hard copy forms. Special recognition was given to James Bays for successfully promoting a great many surveys at Lucy Bell's.

Ferry Committee

Mr. Hill reported that negotiations between the Daufuskie Island Ferry Company and the County are ongoing. The county contract term was through the end of June. It has been

extended twice, and now is effective through the end of August; Mr. Hill is not aware of any problems with negotiations, and said the second extension continues to be in effective.

Mr. Hill also said he is happy to report that today a brand new school bus has been delivered to Daufuskie. The bus has a lift for special needs students. Mr. Hill expressed appreciation to island parents and others who voiced concern about the conditions of the old bus. Their concerns were heard and action has been taken.

Outreach Committee

Mr. Hunter reported that Congressman Sanford held a successful community event outside Lucy Bell's Restaurant. We hope to have future visits from other government officials.

Resources Committee

Mr. Bays was pleased to announce the development of a solar eclipse fundraising party on the following Monday to help support a playground set at the Francis Jones Park. Food, beverages and eclipse watching glasses will be provided for a \$15 fee. The event will probably be held at the pavilion at the end of Beach Road, with the location to be posted on Next Door and on flyers posted around the island. Mr. Bays also reported that County Councilman Tabor Vaux may be interested in pursuing modest funding for the DI Council for routine expenses such as printing and postage.

Roads Committee

Mr. Schartner reported that since the previous Council meeting, the county's grass cutter has been brought back to the island and the sides of the road are once again being mowed. Unfortunately, the road grader is still off the island and is not expected back any time soon.

Solid Waste Committee

Mr. Brawner reported that county officials had come over and viewed all the dead trees in the dump area, and are now planning to remove them. The back hoe needed to clean up the site is down and will probably take a week to be operational. The county officials are open to some of the issues/proposals raised at the public forum. The Solid Waste Committee will be getting together to formulate a specific proposal to present to the DI Council, and (if approved) then to the County officials.

Special Speaker

Ms. Tammy Helmuth, Daufuskie Island Turtle Team

Ms. Helmuth reported that there are 12 members of the turtle team and all work very hard to protect Loggerhead Turtles around Daufuskie Island. This was not a great year. There were 57 nests, down from 98 nests last year, with one nest lost to the tide and 4 nests completely destroyed by armadillos. To protect the remaining nests from predatory intrusions, 8 nests are caged with the device buried 18 inches below the ground. The cages will keep out raccoons and coyotes, but not necessarily armadillos.

Daufuskie is the only turtle nesting area in SC that is having an armadillo problem. A public member suggested burying broken shells around the base of the cage.

Statewide, there were 6056 nests last year, and only 5071 this year. The average size of nests are down this year, and the nest hatching length of time has lowered. No one knows why this is occurring. It is estimated that 5051 Loggerheads and 9 Green Turtles utilized SC beaches. Hilton Head and Daufuskie have only seen Loggerheads this year. There were only 2 leatherbacks ever recorded on DI. They were washed up after being hit by boats.

Those attending the meeting gave Ms. Helmuth a round of applause in appreciation for her team's hard work and efforts.

Public Forum on Roads and Solid Waste Issues

Mr. Schartner reported on a public forum addressing concerns relating to both Historic District roads and the Solid Waste site.

Mr. Schartner explained that after Hurricane Matthew the island's dirt roads were getting torn up by the FEMA trucks. The county approved a proposal to deposit large amounts of asphalt chunks (from another island project) on the roads to help stabilize them. Initially, the plan was to grind the asphalt into aggregate, which would have provided a good base. However, Daufuskie never got the grinder. As a result, there have been continuous complaints from residents about asphalt pieces on Church and School Roads, and other locations. In addition to damage to carts and other vehicles, there are both safety and aesthetic concerns about the asphalt.

Mr. Schartner said officials from the county's Public Works Department had been invited to attend the meeting, but were not in attendance.

Ms. Robinson stated that she witnessed someone on a bike who hit a piece of asphalt in an incident that could have resulted in an injury.

Mr. Schartner distributed a draft Council statement to be sent to county officials, and moved for approval by the Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bays. (See Addendum #1 for original statement.) Mr. Hunter proposed delaying action on the matter until the situation could be discussed further with the county. Ms. Smith stated that the situation had been going on for many months, and she believed the Council needed to take some action. Mr. Hunter did not believe that the statement provided an accurate overview of the reasons for the asphalt problem. Mr. Hill stated that he agreed that it was an important issue to be addressed, but that the reference to the contractor and the county employee were not necessary and might be perceived as "finger pointing." Mr. Bays stated that the asphalt had been there for months, and that the Roads Committee was asked to hold a public forum, which occurred and this statement was the result. Mr. Brawner said that some of the language should be worded differently, but that he

supported an action to fix the problem. Ms. Smith asked Mr. Schartner if he would accept a friendly amendment to the statement which deleted the language in dispute. Mr. Schartner agreed to do so.

Ms. Hunter made a motion to pass the amended version, and Mr. Schartner seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a 7-0 vote. The Council's approved statement to the county regarding the asphalt issue reads as follows:

A machine should be brought to Daufuskie to pulverize all of the asphalt that has been deposited in the Historic District, and the end product should immediately be used to stabilize Daufuskie's dirt roads.

If it is not possible for any reason for a machine to be brought here for this purpose, the Council asks that the County and the contractor work together to remove the asphalt from the island.

Resolution of this issue should occur within the next 60 days.

Off-Shore Drilling Resolution

Ms. Smith stated that at a previous meeting the Council heard from a representative from the Coastal Conservation League about a proposal by the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management which would allow seismic testing and off-shore drilling in the Atlantic Coastal Area. Subsequently, U.S. Representative Mark Sanford addressed this issue at his Daufuskie community event, and asked for support of his legislation blocking these activities which he believes will have considerable environmental and economic consequences for our region. Ms. Smith presented a resolution on this issue. (Addendum #2) She moved for adoption of the resolution, and Mr. Bays seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, the resolution was passed by a 7-0 vote.

Marshside Mama's - County Plans to Sell or Lease Property

Mr. Hill reported that the deadline for responses to the county REF for the sale or lease of the property known as Marshside Mama's was July 26th. Only one bid was received, and we don't know who the bidder is. The Beaufort County Council's Public Facilities Committee will be considering the issue at its upcoming meeting, and the DI Council will continue to closely monitor developments.

Public Forum

Mr. Freddy Grant pointed out that the elevators at the Sandy Lane Villa Buildings are presenting a hazard to people who ride them. He said that there was an unfortunate incident with a young child and her mother getting stuck in the elevator with no lights and the child was very frightened. He said that emergency lights are needed in the elevator. Mr. Hunter asked Mr. Brawner to contact Brian McCarthy about this issue. Ms. Smith suggested that the building manager might be helpful in addressing the issue.

Ms. Aaron Crosby said that he is President of the Daufuskie Island Community Foundation, a 501(c)-3 organization. It was established some time ago and was intended for philanthropic purposes, including as a mechanism to support the philanthropic efforts of the Council. Consequently, Mr. Crosby wanted to remind everyone that the Foundation is available to receive funds for fund-raising activities by the Council.

Adjournment

With no further business at hand, Mr. Hardwick adjourned the meeting at 6:58 pm.

Addendum #1: Draft Statement from Roads Committee to Council (Not Adopted - See Minutes for Approved Revised Language)

Recommendations by Roads Committee to the Daufuskie Island Council

The Roads Committee approved the following statement and recommends its adoption by the Daufuskie Island Council at the August 15, 2017 Council meeting:

Earlier this year a collaboration between Beaufort county and a Daufuskie builder resulted in tons of asphalt chunks being deposited on Daufuskie dirt roads, roadsides, and in piles near the community park. Based on widespread input from the Daufuskie Island community, and especially those living in the Historic District, the Daufuskie Island Council concludes that this “dumping” of asphalt has resulted in a dangerous and unsightly situation, and takes the position that the decision to proceed with this action was a mistake.

Therefore, the Council recommends to Beaufort County that the following occurs:

A machine should be brought to Daufuskie to pulverize all of the asphalt that has been deposited in the Historic District, and the end product should immediately be used to stabilize Daufuskie’s dirt roads.

If it is not possible for any reason for a machine to be brought here for this purpose, the Council asks that the County and the contractor work together to remove the asphalt from the island.

Resolution of this issue should occur within the next 60 days.

Addendum #2: Off-Shore Drilling and Seismic Testing Resolution (Adopted by Council)

RESOLUTION

Opposition of the Daufuskie Island Council to Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling and Seismic Testing Activities on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf

Whereas, the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), under Executive Order, is opening the Mid and South Atlantic Ocean to offshore drilling for oil; and

Whereas, seismic air-guns, used in testing to find oil and natural gas, fire intense blasts of compressed air, one of the loudest manmade sounds in the ocean. These dynamite-like blasts can occur as frequently as every ten seconds, for days to weeks at a time and are loud enough to harm marine and aquatic life, including endangered whales; and,

Whereas, the full impacts of seismic testing and offshore drilling in the Atlantic Ocean are not yet fully understood by scientists, the oil and gas industry, BOEM, or the Federal Government, and lower-impact alternative technologies may be available for exploration in the near future; and

Whereas, exploratory and commercial drilling, extraction, and transportation of offshore oil poses a significant risk of a spill; and

Whereas, “routine” spills, especially during tropical storms and hurricanes, could leave oil slicks and tar balls on Daufuskie Island’s and other Atlantic coast beaches, resulting in devastating consequences to Daufuskie’s vacation and tourism business, as well as a significant decrease in the quality of life for Daufuskie residents; and

Whereas, eventual offshore drilling may require significant onshore infrastructure, such as pipelines or refineries, which may harm the character of our coast; and

Whereas, offshore drilling activities pose threats to coastal wetland areas, which provide immense ecological value for numerous bird species, serve as essential habitats for recreationally and commercially important fisheries, and act as natural buffers from storm surge and hurricanes; and

Whereas, the exploration for and development of oil and natural gas off the mid-Atlantic and South-Atlantic Coast will not effectively or fully address the long-term energy needs of our country, providing only an estimated 6-day supply of oil nationally;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Daufuskie Island Council affirms on this day, August 15th, 2017 that the Council is opposed to Seismic Testing and Offshore Oil and Gas Development on the Outer Continental Shelf of the Atlantic Ocean, and particularly off South Carolina Coast.

Approved by Daufuskie Island Council on August 15, 2017.

