

Daufuskie Island Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 19, 2016

Minutes

Chairman Charlie Small called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

A quorum was present with the following Council Members in attendance:

Charlie Small, Chair
Chuck Hunter, Vice-Chair
Dave Hutton, Vice Chair
Steve Hill, Secretary
Janet Adams
John Schartner
Len Pojednic
Deborah Smith

Steve Hill reported that Council Member Tina Fine was participating by mobile phone. Approximately 45 public members were in attendance.

Council Meeting Time

In regards to a question about the Council's new meeting time, Deborah Smith explained that the new time had been set at the Council's year-beginning organizational meeting in order to accommodate Council members who are not yet retired, and especially those who have to take a boat back from Hilton Head at the end of their work day. Charlie asked for a show of hands from the attending public, and a majority voted in favor of keeping the 6:30 pm time.

Prospect Road Issue Update

Charlie Small reported that 1) the County Council had expressed an interest in this issue being "worked out" to the satisfaction of everyone and 2) the DI Council had facilitated discussions with Reed Dulany, the owner of the Eichelberger Tract, and island property owners who would be most directly impacted the closure or re-routing of Prospect Road.

In response to a question from the audience, Dave Hutton, Co-Chair of the Roads Committee, clarified that the primary purpose of these small discussions was to give Mr. Dulany the opportunity to relay his concerns about the current situation (e.g., dumping of trash on his property, theft of construction materials, illegal poaching, etc) and for the residents to share with him the significance of this road to the island community. Dave said that these were simply the first of many meetings about this issue, and that the Council would not make any decision relating to this matter without full participation by the entire community.

There were several comments from the audience, with the general consensus among the Council members that the Council should continue to work towards an equitable solution. Aaron Crosby addressed the broader issue of the County's failure to take possession of island roads and therefore a property owner has the legal right to move a road going through his/her property

as long as the road's entrance onto the property and exit out of the property remain in the same location.

Council Member Len Pojednic expressed the view that it would be an unfortunate precedent if access was lost to an established island thoroughfare. In response to a question from a community representative, Chuck Hunter said that the county could pursue the legal authority for prescriptive easements for this road, but that he hoped "it will not come to that." Deborah Smith reported that the Council had promised the property owner that we would help educate the community about inappropriate use of his property, including trespassing, hunting, and trash issues, and that the Council asks residents seeking a constructive solution to this controversy to urge other residents and visitors about the need to be respectful of Mr. Dulany's property.

Bloody Point Rezoning Proposal Update

Steve Hill reported that the proposal by the Bloody Point Resort owner was approved at the County Council committee level. Changes made included a reduction of "casitas" down to 125; a reduction down to 60 rooms at the Inn, and elimination of timeshare units. A "2nd reading" of the proposal was scheduled by the County Council for the following week.

Public Ferry Request for Proposal

Steve Hill, Chairman of the Council's Ferry Committee, reported on the status of the County's RFP (Request for Proposal) for the public ferry services contract for the 2016-2017 year. He further reported that two companies are currently interested in submitting bids: the Haig Point Ferry Company and J&W Corporation. He provided the following key dates for the contract process:

April 7, 2016: Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference
April 29, 2016: Proposal Due Date
May 9, 2016: County Council Approval
July 1, 2016: Execute Contract

Based on previous input from island residents, a questionnaire will be sent to the two bidders by the Council. This questionnaire focuses on the scope of services that each company intends to provide to island residents and property owners. The results of this survey will be shared with the County officials and staff who are responsible for choosing the bid. This will be for informational purposes only, and the DI Council will not be endorsing a specific company for this bid.

There were extensive comments and questions by community representatives about the public ferry service issue, including:

- Aside from the ticket price, what will be the "add-on fees" for such things as large items (now often requiring a barge trip for a very high fee), wagons to carry groceries, coolers, etc?
- Will the schedule be conducive to people who rely on this service for a regular job on Hilton Head or surrounding areas? A similar question was asked about someone who was attending college.

- What are the actual costs of running the boat? Isn't it true that the county contract funds won't cover all those costs, and that additional funding sources will be necessary to make a comprehensive ferry system to Daufuskie practical?
- For such things as jobs and doctors appointments on Hilton Head, it's important that the ferry schedule be consistent. Frequently changing the hours and days of operation causes difficulties for residents who depend on this service to get to the other side.
- Will the boat services be handicap accessible?
- Can there be a covered place to wait for the boat arrival/departure at both docks?
- In response to a question about why Haig Point is involved in a public ferry service "after all these years," HP CEO Doug Egly responded that Haig Point believes in an island-wide solution to the ferry services issue. "We believe that the success of a reliable and affordable ferry system depends on a group effort." He also said that there are economies of scale that will benefit the overall effort when a ferry services has different services components.

Several Council members made comments confirming the high priority of this issue for the Council, and the Council's commitment to advocating for community needs as the selection process for next year's public ferry services moves forward.

Daufuskie Island Francis Jones Park

Council Member Chuck Hunter reported significant progress with County officials and staff regarding the Request for Proposal for installation of restrooms at this park. He said that the county representatives now acknowledge that the previous RFP did not reflect the unique issues involved with installing restrooms on a bridge-less island, which had led to unnecessarily high priced bids. Chuck said that he was being given the opportunity to provide a more realistic draft design to be used for a revised RFP for these facilities. He clarified that the grant money provided by the South Carolina Department of Parks and Recreations was only for this particular location, but that other funds would be available for restrooms at the Bloody Point beach location and at the county dock. Chuck also said that he expected positive action on this issue by the next Council Meeting.

On a related matter, Chuck said that the Council is working with Mike Loftus, of the Daufuskie Island Conservancy, on wildlife and fauna signage for walking trails throughout the park, and that there was potential involvement by the US National Park Service's Director of the Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor for assistance with murals and landmarks. Chuck is confident that when completed, the park will serve as a popular resource for the island and will be a legacy for future Daufuskie generations.

Appreciation was expressed by Council members and the public about Chuck's efforts on behalf of this project.

Capital Project Sales Tax

Steve Hill reported on the status of the effort to obtain approval for Daufuskie projects under the proposed Capital Project Sales Tax. He said that the Daufuskie Island Council has applied for

County funding for several Daufuskie Island Plan priority projects. Three of these projects remain under consideration by the relevant county commission: 1) \$1 million for a 30-40-passenger ferry that could carry cargo and be incorporated into a public-private partnership; 2) \$1.5 million to help the county acquire rights-of-way on several roads to build water and sewer infrastructure and complete other upgrades; and 3) \$2 million to purchase and develop a single waste collection and disposal site for all island communities and commercial enterprises.

The Commission is currently evaluating all of the proposed projects, and the Daufuskie Island Council will continue to advocate for approval of the Daufuskie projects. After the County decides on specific projects to be included in this project, approval of the one-time \$120 million sales tax increase will be on the November ballot.

Doorway to Daufuskie Project

Council Member John Schartner reported on the near-completion of the “Doorway to Daufuskie” Project. This collaboration between the Council and the Hilton Head Chamber of Commerce’s Leadership Council will result in historic landmark signage at both the Freeport Marina and the County Dock. The signs included a map of the island, location of historic sites designated by the DI Historic Foundation, and a brief description of each site. The other side of the signs would include a glass case bulletin board that will be used for bulletins and announcements of interest to the entire island community. John said that ribbon cutting events would be held on Friday, May 6th at the Freeport Marina and the County Dock, and that a large contingent of the Leadership Council will be attending. He urged other Council Members and the public to attend these events.

The Council expressed appreciate to John for his hard work on this project.

The Bailey Bill Program

Steve Hill reported that Daufuskie’s council representative, Tabor Vaux, has proposed that the Bailey Bill Program should be applied to Daufuskie Island. He made this proposal because of the significance of Daufuskie’s many historic structures, and especially those on the National Historic Registry,

Steve said that this program already applies to a number of municipalities, including the City of Beaufort. The bill authorizes local governments to offer a special property tax assessment for rehabilitated historic buildings. The main feature of the Bailey Bill Program is to assess property on the pre-rehabilitation fair market value for twenty (20) years. This means the owner of a historic structure will continue to pay property tax on the pre-rehab value of the property, but does not pay tax on the increased value due to the renovations for twenty years.

Michael Bedenbaugh, of the Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation, spoke on behalf of this measure.

Council Action: A motion endorsing the inclusion of Daufuskie Island under the provisions of the Bailey Bill was made by Steve Hill, and seconded by Janet Adams. The motion received unanimous approval by the Council. Steve will forward this recommendation to the County Council.

Social Media

Deborah Smith announced the creation of the Council Facebook page, and said that there were already over 100 “Likes”. The page will be used to promote communications with the community, and also to educate county and state public officials, among others, about Council activities. Deborah urged community members to follow this page and to indicate support by “Liking” the page. Public comments that are worded in a civil and constructive manner will be welcome. (The page address is: <https://www.facebook.com/Daufuskie-Island-Council-1528500384111842/>)

Daufuskie Island Plan Committee

Council Members Janet Adams and Deborah Smith are co-chairs of the Daufuskie Island Plan Committee. The Plan represents a 6 year initiative and thousands of hours of work by many Daufuskie residents, County representatives, and others, and was designed to serve as a blueprint for the island, and especially as a means to protect and enhance our unique historic, cultural, and environmental resources. The Council wants to ensure that the Plan continues to be a viable resource as inevitable changes are proposed for Daufuskie. Janet and Deborah asked for volunteers in the community to serve on this committee, and expressed special interest in residents who had been involved in developing the initial plan.

Public Comments

Mike Loftus, the new president of the Daufuskie Island Conservancy, gave a brief overview of 2016 organization issues and activities. He said that the Conservancy is looking for a volunteer coordinator of the Adopt-a-Road program. He urged people to go to the Conservancy’s website for information on important issues and to donate to the Conservancy. He also talked about the threat of salt water intrusion into the island’s water sources, and the need to be responsible about personal water consumption. Mike promoted the semi-annual “Beach Sweep” scheduled for the following Saturday, and reported that the Freeport Marina has agreed to stop providing styrofoam cups to restaurant customers and day tourists.

Sallie Ann Robinson, renowned author of Gullah cookbooks and a Daufuskie celebrity, announced that she intends to move back to the Island. Sallie Ann’s family was on the island for generations, and her parents were the beloved Jake and Flossie Washington. Sallie Ann’s announcement that she is moving back to Daufuskie was met with resounding applause.

Georgia Rosenberry referenced the earlier discussion about the public ferry, and said she didn’t want to have to pay \$10 each way to pull her little red wagon with groceries onto the boat. She also talked about the problems with being told that she had to send her bag of potting soil on the barge for a very high fee as opposed to carrying it on the boat.

Jenny Hersch announced a Safe Boating class offered by the Department of Natural Resources and being held the following Saturday in the Haig Point boardroom. Also, a CPR course was scheduled at the Fire Department the following Thursday. For more information contact Chief Eddie Boys. Several other community events were mentioned, and especially the Oyster Roast scheduled for the following Sunday at Jolly Shores and benefitting the Daufuskie Island Elementary School.

There being no further business, Chairman Small adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah Smith