

Daufuskie Island Council Meeting
August 16, 2016
Minutes

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

Charlie Small
Dave Hutton
Chuck Hunter
Steve Hill
Janet Adams
Deborah Smith
Len Pojednic

Absent:

Tina Fine
John Schartner

A majority of members being present, there was a duly constituted quorum.

Report on Freedman Proposal

Charlie Small reported that a community meeting was held on August 8th at the Melrose Island House featuring Roger Freedman, Aaron Crosby, and a land planner who presented their plan for development of the Webb Tract. This meeting, which was attended by approximately 100 residents, was the first of a series of presentations that will be provided by Mr. Freedman and his team about their plans for the Webb Tract property. Charlie Small indicated that this is the start of a long process.

Deborah Smith, Chair of the Council's Daufuskie Island Plan Committee, reported that Tony Criscitiello, Director of Beaufort County's Planning Department, asked her to inform the Council and the Daufuskie community that there would be a Staff Review Team that will be examining this plan for adherence to the Daufuskie Island Plan and the Daufuskie Code. Mr. Criscitiello invites interested DI Council members and Daufuskie community members to attend the Team's meetings relating to this plan. Deborah suggested that members of the community forward to her any questions they

might have about this plan so that they can be addressed at the appropriate time. (debsmith1000@gmail.com)

Golf Cart Sticker Program

Janet Adams reported on a Council initiative designed to educate island visitors about responsible golf cart operation through instructional stickers. The sticker would be affixed to the inside of the cart's roof, and would state guidelines including: Licensed adult drivers only are allowed; no driving on the beaches or off-road; no alcoholic beverages allowed; riders must be seated, no horseplay; and respect for other drivers, wildlife, and pedestrians. Several members of the public provided suggestions to maximize effectiveness of the stickers, including inserting a statement that all SC Rules of the Road apply to carts, and to shorten the list for easily-read bullet points. Janet will be following up with cart providers for input and to obtain agreement that these stickers will be used.

Accommodations tax grants

Deborah Smith reported that the Council is working with several island organizations on behalf of a County grant application designed to benefit tourism on Daufuskie. The grants are funded through the county's accommodations tax, levied on all vacation home renters. The coalition group, which would include the Council, the DI Historic Foundation, the DI Conservancy, and perhaps others will propose a brochure or similar product that will be made available to all vacation rental guests. The brochure will provide information about organization's benefiting the island and educational tips about how visitors can help protect the island's resources. Andy Mason, with the DI Historical Foundation, is spearheading this effort.

The deadline for submission of the application is September 7th.

Daufuskie Island Public Ferry Services Guide

Steve Hill reported that the county has made available a draft version of their new Daufuskie ferry services guide. The guide includes information on the Palmetto Breeze program, and Steve went over the guide and sought input from public members. Areas covered included: photo ID cards and classification of cards; parking (availability, fees, and guidelines); and key contacts.

Daufuskie Island Co-Op

Dave Hutton provided an overview of the Daufuskie Island Co-Op. He explained that the co-op has been in existence for over 25 years, with the primary objective to oversee the building now rented by Marshside Mama's, as well as the General Store, restroom facility, and surrounding areas. The Co-Op leases the buildings from Beaufort County, and the owner of Marshside Mama's leases the restaurant building from the Co-op. The General Store is run by the Co-Op, and not the restaurant owner.

Major activities conducted by the Co-Op board include the Thanksgiving community dinner and the Daufuskie Christmas parade and festival. The Co-Op is comprised of approximately 60 members, and the annual meeting is held on Thanksgiving Day. Dave said volunteers are needed for both the Christmas and Thanksgiving events, and those interested in volunteering should contact Laura Leigh

at

Lauraleighmiles@yahoo.com

Dave also said that the current bathroom facility is "falling apart" so the co-op is now leasing air conditioned portable bathrooms until new bathrooms are built.

The three Board officers

are Ed Campbell, president, Dave Hutton, vice-president, and Laura Leigh, treasurer. Dave said that anyone interested in joining the co-op should contact him.

Turtle Team Report

Janet Adams reported that 97 nests have been identified by the Turtle Team, representing an all-time record high. (The previous record was 85.) Blue ribbons are now on 64 nests, indicating that hatchings are expected soon. A DNR representative is coming over to inspect the nests on August 19th. Team volunteers have reported that the female turtles are digging nests much deeper this year, and hatchings can occur over a 3-4 day period of time.

Bailey Bill

Steve Hill reported on the “Bailey Bill.” This is legislation pending in the county council which would allow owners of historic residences who renovate homes to continue paying taxes at the pre-renovation level for a certain period of time. Michael Bedenbaugh, from the Palmetto Trust Foundation, commented on the importance of the bill and said that without this change in the tax code, many owners of historic homes on Daufuskie may not be able to proceed with restoring these endangered buildings. Steve reported that the DI Council approved by unanimous vote a resolution endorsing the Bailey Bill, and that he will be sharing that resolution with the County Council.

Open Session - Public Comments/Questions

Question: How are the reviews of ferry ridership?

Steve Hill said that the feedback from the Daufuskie Island Ferry Company’s new boat service has all been positive, and several public representatives echoed those sentiments, with one comment especially complimenting the “professionalism and courtesy” of the crews, and another comment about the friendliness of the employees and helpful assistance with bags.

Question: What is the parking situation?

Steve Hill said Pelorus provides 35 spots for residents.

Question: How is ridership on the new ferry boat?

Steve Hill said that ridership has been good, but that most are now island residents and that an increase is expected when more vacation guests start to use the service. Haig Point CEO Doug Egley stated that the average passengers per boat has been 8.9.

A public representative (Bill Tate) said that there was a very positive contract “kick-off” meeting with the county staff and other ferry partners.

Comment/Question: There was discussion about an incident the previous weekend that had been reported by several residents and involved visitors riding carts on the beach, disrupting turtle’s nests, and physically threatening an island resident who tried to intervene. Frustration was expressed by several public members that the island resident’s call to the sheriff’s office was not productive, since he was told that there was no available deputy and boat

to come over to Daufuskie at that time. Various ways to prevent future incidents were discussed, with most of the comments indicating support for an increased presence of the county sheriff's office at least on weekends. There was a specific request from one of the public members that the DI Council make a direct request of the County for a larger presence of the sheriff's department on weekends and to inquire why a boat was not dispatched when there was an incident reported to them. Dave Hutton said he thought that many cases could be solved without involvement by the sheriff's office, and suggested as an example that when there are visitors who violate our laws local business should be contacted and asked not to do business with the offenders.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.