

The Town of James Island held a Community Drainage Meeting on Monday, May 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, 1122 Dills Bluff Road, James Island, SC. This meeting was duly noticed according to the SC Freedom of Information Act and was live-streamed on the Town's website at www.jamesislandsc.us

Present: Councilmembers: Darren (Troy) Mullinax, Lewis Dodson, Dan Boles, and Mayor Brook Lyon who presided. Also: Mike Hemmer, Town Administrator, Keith LaDeaux, Public Works Coordinator/Project Manager, Melissa Flick, Permitting & Licensing Manager, Chris Wannamaker, Charleston County, Tom Murray, WK Dickson Engineering, representing a SC Office of Resiliency James Island Creek basin study, and Laura Cabiness, Johnson, Laschober Associates (JLA). Approximately 32 members of the public were in attendance (sign in sheet attached)

Melissa Flick, Permitting and Licensing Manager and Keith LaDeaux, Public Works Coordinator/Project Manager gave an overview of the Town's Stormwater Program.

Intro by Mayor Lyon– discussed purpose of meeting and that there is no easy fix for drainage issues. Negative factors include neglected ditches, rampant construction, and loss of trees. Large drainage projects are using staff time. She thanked Chris Wannamaker (Charleston County Public Works) for attending. 10,000 open requests with SCDOT for Charleston County. “Department of Training” struggles to retain staff even after pay raises. Mayor Lyon shared her property tax bill to show no tax paid to the Town of James Island and explained where the Town does get revenue. She wasn't sharing to complain or poor mouth. She provided examples of where we go from here, including advertised RFP, vac truck demo scheduled for July, don't fill in ditches, plant more trees, and limit what trees we do cut down. The Town must become more independent. Drainage projects were addressed and mentioned making maintenance road of Oceanview/Stonepost project into an amenity. A review of the agenda was given and Councilmembers Troy Mullinax, Dan Boles, and Lewis Dodson were introduced. Also introduced was Laura Cabiness, (JLA) and Tom Murray (WK Dickson).

Chris Wannamaker introduced himself and asked attendees to notify the Town first and the Town will communicate to County. He said that 2011 was the driest year on record. If you see something, say something!

The floor was opened to questions from the public which were addressed by Mayor Lyon, staff and the elected officials in attendance.

Citizens Speaking –

Mr. Green – Suggested use of chain gangs and asking Senator why we can't use them for ditch cleaning. Why let incarcerated people sit in jail doing nothing.

Lewis Dodson – Spoke on working with AmeriCorps to get a group here for six (6) months session, possibly as soon as November. This should be made an island wide project, not just a Town project.

Lamar Watkins – Lives on Trenholm off Oceanview. He commented that water comes from Oceanview to his street. The easement has trees growing in it and needs to be cleaned.

Daughter of Pauline Ave Resident – Issues with house flooding. Had French drains installed and pump under house. Sandy Senn was on location with Task Force and suggested they move, but not

possible at 85. No flooding during Hugo, and streets flooded on March 9th. Ditch runs behind house and no movement on water.

Arleen 1181 Bradford – New owners purchased lot behind her and raised lot with dirt, causing flooding to five (5) houses. Received \$15,000 French drain estimate including resodding. Water coming from Folly Rd also. Provided packets to Mayor Lyon of estimates received.

Resident – Mentioned asking Town attorney about liability if individuals causes flooding.

An Oceanview resident called SCDOT about clogged pipe on Trenholm. No flow in ditch on regular rain and it smells and has mosquitoes. She maintains her ditch and puts cones out to keep folks from driving into ditch. The road is crumbling from standing water that sits for days, and grass is growing on the roadway.

Bill Lyon – No comments. Brook announced that he was her husband, and they were celebrating 30 years of marriage on Tuesday.

Alex – Lives on Trenholm and agreed with previous comments on the Oceanview drainage project. There is new flooding where it didn't occur before.

Adam – Lives on Cecil and mentioned crushed culvert. Dirt bikes are racing down maintenance road.

Dylan Meyer – Lives in a red roof house on Oceanview and is king of the hill (on the highest point). He has done renovation to the house due to an inside leak and pulled all subfloor up. Six (6) inches of water was in crawl space. Mentioned extensive knowledge of construction and that Oceanview residents need to seek legal counsel. He too can hear the dirt bikes racing.

Bright – Lives on Stonepost and came to see when the project will be completed.

Resident of 956 W Oceanview – House next door built by Crescent Homes. He was misled by County, Town, and Crescent on install of French drains.

Chris 1128 Oceanview – The ditch is now a moat. Where are we on fixing issues from Oceanview/Stonepost project? He has met with Keith and the Mayor many times. Very concerned with the exposed gas line. He was digging in ditch because sides eroding, and culvert is full of sand and dirt. The gas line does have a cover on it from sand filling in.

Hillary Smith (goes by Jean) 1155 Bradford Ave – Has resided at this address, located between Shandon and Sutton, since 1990. Willow Walk is behind her. Shallow ditch never drains and has standing water every day. There is too much water and the ponds in Willow Walk are green and probably have bodies in them. Insulted looking at large issues (for multiple residents) first and not singles.

Skylar – Where is the County wanting to be involved? Chris Wannamaker was asked to answer. He explained that we are not God, and can manage expectations, but it will flood again.

Lynn 690 Prentiss St – When road was repaved it caused water to come down driveway, into yard, and to the pond behind her. Keith stated he is going to check this week with rain events happening. She stated the ditch is not the problem.

Brian Duffy – Lives on Stonepost and asked Keith to check the 3rd house on the right because one side of ditch is open, and the other side is blocked. He has lived in house for 30 years and new construction is bringing flooding. Talked with Hunter Quinn and was mentioned property needed to be elevated to start construction. Cecil Circle is where water is going and damage to culvert, he blames on heavy equipment. The company chosen for drainage work might not have been the correct one. Keith explained the proposal to replace the pipe from Ms. Maggie's house to canal.

Emily and Phillip 1226 Julian Clark – In April 2020 they purchased current residence and have lived in several places on the island. Drainage there is completely full and sent a complaint in March. After rain in April, water pumped for three days from under the house. Don't know what to do. Water comes and stays until absorbed in the ground. Water stands and doesn't move.

Leigh O – Lives on W. Oceanview and has work order into SCDOT for ditch cleaning. Asked how residents can track without bugging the Town.

Henrietta – Greenhill project was approved when working on Stonepost, for work on Williams, Greenhill, Honeyhill, and Seaside. Flooding on rental house from new construction. Contractors are only installing rain barrels and would like to see French drain to flow to drains at ditch.

Mr. Green – Ben Rd gave an easement to dig a new ditch, but stakes have been moved closer to his house. Keith stated he would investigate this.

A list of useful links and phone numbers were provided to the public as information, as well as a drainage input form for residents to complete for drainage issues. The Town will review and monitor those forms and send to the appropriate agency if not in the Town's jurisdiction.