

## **James Island Intergovernmental Council**

**September 28, 2022 @ 7:00 pm via Zoom**

### **Meeting Minutes**

Attending: SC State House Representative Spencer Wetmore, Town of James Island: Mayor Woolsey and Councilmembers Troy Mullinax and Garrett Milliken. City of Charleston: Councilwoman Caroline Parker (Chair) and Councilman Ross Appel. Charleston County: Councilwoman Jenny Honeycutt. James Island Public Service District: Commissioners Marilyn Clifford, Brenda Grant, Susan Milliken, Kathy Woolsey. Staff members present: Phillip Sexton of the Charleston County Legislative Delegation, Dave Schaeffer, James Island Public Service District Manager, Niki Grimbball, James Island Town Administrator and Mark Johnson, Town of James Island Public Works; Michael Mathis, City of Charleston Transportation, and Dale Morris, City of Charleston Chief Resilience Officer.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:28 pm via Zoom due to technical problems. The meeting was moved to virtual due to the potential threat and preparations for Hurricane Ian. Beginning with a moment of silence, introductions followed.

Public Comments: Chair Parker called for public comments. Commissioner Clifford read into the record a public comment received from Mr. L. Ray Whaley (1930 Grimbball Road) regarding flooding in the Carver neighborhood (letter attached to minutes). Councilwoman Honeycutt asked that Mr. Whaley's information be sent so it may be provided to Mr. Sexton and Councilwoman Anna Johnson as this area is within her district. Rep. Wetmore requested that Mr. Sexton look into this issue.

#### **1. City Updates: (Chair Parker)**

- a. Harborview Rd/ Ft. Johnson Park Improvements Updates: City Council approved some updates; Chair Parker stated that the old park equipment had been removed and new equipment should be installed by the end of October 2022.
- b. Ft. Pemberton Update: Chair Parker noted that an LWCF grant had been awarded for Phase I improvements. Assuming that the formal notification is received, acceptance of the grant funding by City Council is anticipated for the Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Design and construction would occur in 2023.
- c. Redistricting Update: The City is still working through redistricting efforts; Chair Parker stated that they are essentially looking at three plans, noting that plan 1A has minimal change to the current Council districts. Plan 1B is a variation of plan 1A and option 2 show the most change to the James Island districts, moving districts 3 and 6 to Johns Island and whichever district is moved to Johns Island would also have a portion of James Island. This option would change Councilmember Appel's district boundaries on James Island. She asked that this information be shared with residents and provided that these options would be presented at the October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 workshop followed by the October 10<sup>th</sup> public hearing.

Councilwoman Honeycutt added that a Greenbelt project on Howle Avenue within the City had been closed on and drainage improvements would soon begin in that basin

near Maybank Highway. Chair Parker and Councilmember Appel offered their thanks for work on this project.

2. Drainage Issues:

- a. Shoreham/ Willow Walk/Oakcrest Stormwater Improvements: Chair Parker provided an update stating that property owners had completed tree relocations and the City had completed tree removal. Design for the rear yard swale installation is complete and they are working to schedule the construction crew on this project. The City worked to bid this project out but due to the expense, the City decided to do this project in-house.
- b. Central Park Road Drainage Improvements: City Council approved the final design permitting work with AECOM and had initial discussions with the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), and were currently working on surveying for the project with the consulting team. The permitting process with USACE is expected to take two years with finalized design based on earlier discussions. Chair Parker hopes to bring more information on current and future projects to the January 2023 meeting.
- c. Lower Trapier (Sweetgrass Creek Rd.): Chair Parker noted that she and Mayor Woolsey had discussed this issue previously, and that she had received information from homeowners in early September 2022. On the City side, she is aware of an Army Corp of Engineers permit that is required for improvements. The issue is not only erosion, but also the outfall. When it was cleaned, they found that the outfall had built up sediment and that additional improvements would require permitting. Councilwoman Honeycutt suggested that Mark Johnson, Town of James Island Public Works, may be able to offer more information as he was on the call. Mr. Johnson stated that this has been an ongoing problem dating back before the Town existed. At the end of Trapier there are two catch basins (one to the right and one to the left). The catch basin on the left belongs to the City and the catch basin on the right belongs to the Town. The complicating factor is that the road belongs to SCDOT. Engineers from all of these stakeholders have looked at this issue to see what could be done, and it was determined that the USACE would need to make this determination. Some efforts have been made on the City's part to blow out the culvert to the marsh, but the blockage by pluff mud was very extensive. The catch basin to the right (Town's side) appears to stay clear. Councilwoman Honeycutt suggested that due to the multi-jurisdictional nature of this issue, she asked Rep. Wetmore if this could also go to the Legislative Delegation to assist. Chair Parker added to Mr. Johnson's explanation that the City has added this to their list of outfalls for permitting based on the findings found when cleaning the drain. They are putting several permits together and have spent \$14,000 on consulting fees for to date. They are currently addressing comments from the agency and note that it is important to follow state and federal regulations, however they do cause a delay in maintenance scheduling. Chair Parker relayed information that SCDHEC and the USACE have improved their permitting processes specifically for cleaning outfalls. The City is currently preparing a series of applications to clear outfalls throughout Charleston, including this outfall.

Councilwoman Honeycutt asked if item b. (Central Park Road Drainage Improvements) had been skipped; Chair Parker restated the updates she provided earlier in the meeting. Councilwoman Honeycutt added that for the County update on this item, a SCIIP grant application had been submitted for this project.

Mayor Woolsey added that many efforts have been made by other elected officials to streamline the USACE permitting process. He asked that Rep. Wetmore assist in moving these efforts forward to lessen the time for approval on cleaning outfalls.

Councilwoman Honeycutt invited Mr. Sexton to provide more information; he stated that the new regional general permit is now in place, which is intended to speed up the application process from one year to less than 90 days. Rep. Wetmore clarified that the new regional general permit process is a state application, and Mr. Sexton added that this permit would apply to both USACE and DHEC permits (federal and state). He and Councilwoman Honeycutt elaborated on the public comment period and how to relieve issues that environmental groups had in this process.

- d. Ft. Johnson Road and Folly Road Flooding (Mayor Woolsey): Mayor Woolsey reiterated previous discussions of flooding at this intersection, and provided photos of a recent flood event. He mentioned that while the flooding may appear to be minimal, it lasts a long period of time before rescinding. Mayor Woolsey shared a map and described the drainage system in the area and showing how the water drains from Ft. Johnson and Folly which is an indirect and long route. Water flows across and down the east side of Folly, then crosses to west side near Avenue A and runs back east. He shared photos of the drains and ditches in this area to show the variety of regular maintenance occurring in the area. On the east side of Folly beside Emmanuel Baptist Church, he shared a photo of blockage. The Town requested that DOT clean out these pipes, but suggested that a regular maintenance schedule be established. He asked that all the jurisdictions make these requests to the SCDOT. Rep. Wetmore asked for clarification about the SCDOT portion near the Folly Road Auto. Chair Parker introduced Dale Morris, the City's Chief Resilience Officer, and stated that she would also share this information with the City Stormwater Department. Councilwoman Honeycutt invited Mr. Sexton to weigh in on this issue. He shared his screen showing a topological survey showing the natural function and which explains some of the issues that are seen here as there is not enough gradient in the slope. Dale Morris joined and suggested that use of the topological map and looking at the elevation of slopes at the top and bottom of these systems are essential in finding solutions in these matters.
- e. Nabors Drive (Mayor Woolsey): Mayor Woolsey presented issues of flooding on Nabors Drive where a tree is growing at the end of the culvert creating a blockage in the City's jurisdiction. He stated issues with other areas where residents are not amenable to digging or clearing ditches, and reminded the group that it is important that all jurisdictions continue to maintain drainage so that the system works as it is supposed to and not be swayed by residents requests or assumptions that lack of maintenance is not causing flooding issues in other parts of the system.

Commissioner Milliken asked if the tree had been measured or rated, to which Mayor Woolsey responded that this information doesn't matter in these cases. Commissioner Milliken stated that it does matter and that the City has an arborist that Chair Parker could ask to evaluate the tree's condition and identify what kind of tree it is. Mayor Woolsey recalled that it is a hackberry tree, but that either way that is not relevant in this situation. Commissioner Milliken responded that hackberry trees are hardwood trees and protected by the City of Charleston. Chair Parker requested the address to follow up. Mayor Woolsey reiterated that a stance to protect trees that are blocking drainage is an issue that should be stood against strongly. Commissioner Milliken stated that the public should be protected against mayors that want to cut down trees in right-of-ways. Chair Parker requested that she look into the issue and bring it back at a later date.

- f. Camp Road Drainage Basin Study (Mayor Woolsey): When the City, County, and Town previously delineated all of basins in the area, the Camp Road drainage basin was identified having ongoing drainage issues from Bradford Ave., under Folly Road, into and behind Yorktown, into Bishop Gadsden and next to St. James Church on Camp Road. Town Council approved the study of this basin and the City is looking into assisting in funding this request.
- g. Debris Impact on Ditches (Commissioner Woolsey): Commissioner Woolsey mentioned a recent issue she saw where landscapers/homeowners blow leaves and debris into the ditches which then causes flooding issues. She called for public service announcements showing the impact that this has on the drainage systems and suggested that people be issued citations for littering.
- h. Flooding on Signal Point Road (Commissioner Woolsey): Signal Point Road, which is the location of the JIPSD and the largest business park on James Island, is the site of a lot of flooding. Chair Parker asked if anyone could explain the history of this situation. Commissioner Woolsey shared photos of flooding after a regular rain event. After walking the site dry, she found that there is a berm/hump of soil where the side of the road is 8-10" higher than the road and the ditch, causing the water to remain on the road instead of running off to the ditch. Pipes and drains continually hold water for many days after rain events. She reiterated the importance of these business operations on the island, and that this affects many employees that come to work here. District Manager Schaeffer elaborated on this issue that the PSD has solutions of moving employees and vehicles to other locations on James Island, noting that some other businesses may not be able to accommodate for.
- i. Charleston County Flooding Updates (Councilwoman Honeycutt): Councilwoman Honeycutt stated that many of the issues she planned to address had already been touched on, she requested that Mr. Sexton be given a few minutes to discuss the nature of the Charleston County Legislative Delegation's Flooding Task Force and his role. Mr. Sexton introduced the Task Force which started in 2018 to mitigate flooding impacts. Having previous work on the engineering side of flooding, he now works to coordinate intergovernmental solutions to reduce the impacts of flooding. There is an application process in place to report flooding and upload photos, then he will perform a technical review and meet with the agencies involved and share his recommendations. The next

part is followed up with the agencies to report progress, noting that many of these agencies are severely understaffed. He's having to stress patience with constituents as solutions could take months (and years for harder solutions) and not just days or weeks. He expressed his desire to work with the representatives on the Council.

3. Transportation:

- a. Signal timing studies, Folly Rd., Camp Rd., Harborview Rd. and Fort Sumter Drive (Chair Parker): Camp and Folly- the City hired a firm to collect data on congestion at this intersection and are currently evaluating the data to see where they can help alleviate the traffic. Harborview Rd. and Ft. Sumter Drive- Michael Mathis of the City of Charleston, stated that at this intersection, signal timing has been adjusted, which should show a more positive flow during the morning and school drop off hours.
- b. Oct. 11 Public Hearing on N. Sterling Drive (Chair Parker): A public hearing is scheduled regarding the abandonment and closure of the road, Chair Parker asked that input be provided on this matter.
- c. Nabors Drive Sidewalk (Mayor Woolsey): Mayor Woolsey introduced this item stating that the Town had JLA provide a proposal that the City had previously been interested in. He explained that this is a cut-through route. Ms. Grimball showed maps identifying the multiple jurisdictions affected by this road; having 44% in the City, 16% in the Town, and 9% unincorporated. She showed that the sidewalk would tie into an existing sidewalk and existing condition photos. The estimate of probable cost is \$468,682 and what that shared cost breakdown would be. Mayor Woolsey stated that this is an important project and requested that the other entities consider this in their future budgets.

Commissioner Brenda Grant asked if there were any updates on the Sol Legare Community sidewalks and streetlights. Councilwoman Jenny Honeycutt asked that Devri Detoma be promoted to provide an explanation.

- d. Charleston County Transportation Update (Councilwoman Honeycutt-presentation attached): Ms. Detoma provided an update on the transportation projects on James Island. After the conclusion of the updates, Councilwoman Honeycutt provided her support and priority for pedestrian and cyclist-safety, and gave an explanation on the County's process for resurfacing different types of roads, noting that some roads may not be eligible for standard resurfacing due to age and may require a different treatment.

Chair Parker called upon Commissioner Grant, who asked about the Sol Legare Sidewalk project, stating that many elderly residents do not want their property taken, and asked for clarification about what will it take to get this project funded and provide answers to the community. Ms. Detoma explained that when a project is CTC funded, they are not able to acquire/buy right-of-way; it must be granted by the property owners. There are also issues with heirs' properties where the property ownership is in question, so there is no owner to give right-of way. She went on to the next question stating that

whenever a project is done in the right-of-way, they are required to pipe the ditches, which is very expensive. The money granted by the CTC is divided between projects across all county entities and can't be given just to one project to be fully funded.

Commissioner Milliken asked if Ms. Detoma knew when the traffic study was done at Secessionville Road and Ft. Johnson Road. Ms. Detoma stated that it was originally done in 2016. Commissioner Milliken asked when additional studies were performed; Ms. Detoma answered that one had been done before school let out last spring (2022) and another study when school started around the second week in August (2022). She stated that all studies done since the original 2016 study had shown less issues which did not satisfy the DOT's requirements for installing traffic signals. Commissioner Milliken requested that Charleston County Public Works take note that the community really wants a signal at Secessionville and Ft. Johnson Roads. She recalled that the community really wanted one at Grimball Ext. and Folly Road and it took a legislative act to get that signal put in. She offered to assist with a petition or collection of letters if that would help the effort. Chair Parker asked that Ms. Detoma let the group know when the next study is completed.

4. JIPSD SCIIP Grant Application Submittals (2) (Dave Schaeffer): Mr. Schaeffer provided information about the Community Impact Grant for the sewer expansion project to eliminate septic systems along James Island Creek. The total project cost is \$10.3 mil. The 15% local match is \$1.545 mil, for which the State allocated \$1 mil in its budget to go towards this requirement which was fought hard for by Rep. Wetmore. The Town agreed to contribute \$444,000, CWS \$85,000 and JIPSD \$18,000.

The second SCIIP grant that the JIPSD applied for with Charleston Water System to expand the force main running along Harborview Road to Plum Island. The existing force main that goes through the marsh was constructed in 1996; the CWS main was constructed much earlier than that. This would be a force main to build redundancy and resilience. \$8.8 mil total project cost with a local \$1.320 mil match shared by JIPSD and CWS.

He expects to know more about grant awards in March of 2023.

Miscellaneous:

1. 2023 Schedule: All meetings will be in-person at Town Hall and provided a list of meeting dates (Jan. 25, April 26, July 26, and Oct. 25, 2023 at 7:00 pm).

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

September 28, 2022

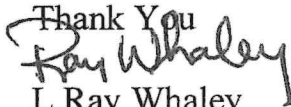
Good Evening,

My name is Lawrence (Ray) Whaley, I live at 1930 Grimball Road and board member of the Grimball Area Improvement Association. Residents of the Carver Subdivision have alerted me on several occasions about flooding in their neighborhood. A study had been done some time ago to open drainages in and behind this area; however, we have not heard anything regarding its findings.

Under new business for tonight, many areas are listed having drainage concerns and I am sure that they are being and will be addressed. Living in a geographically unincorporated domicile and paying taxes – I believe that attention and a plan of action should be equally administered as those listed on the agenda.

If I am in the wrong setting to voice the concerns of my fellow community members I ask for your guidance and/or direction to relieve the flooding issue of the Carver Subdivision neighborhood. I eagerly await your response and assistance in this matter.

Again, my name is Lawrence (Ray) Whaley, Board Member, Grimball Area Improvement Association.

Thank You  
  
L Ray Whaley  
8453.870.5369