

MINUTES
September 7, 2017
EMERGENCY COUNCIL MEETING
10:30 A.M.

Town of Edisto Beach
Town Hall
2414 Murray Street
Edisto Beach, SC 29438

Present: Jane S. Darby, Mayor, Susan Hornsby, Mayor Pro Tempore, Jerome Kizer, Crawford Moore, and Patti Smyer, Council Members; *Quorum of Council Present.*

Mayor Darby called the meeting to order opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and an invocation.

New Business

A. Hurricane Irma – The purpose of the emergency meeting was to discuss Hurricane Irma. Police Chief George Brothers gave an update to those in attendance. Chief Brothers reported that as of the 8:00 a.m. update, the track of Hurricane Irma had not changed. Chief Brothers added, “The big concern for us is not necessarily the rainfall but the storm surge. I can’t tell you what that’s going to be yet, hopefully at 11:30 we’ll get better information from the National Weather Service, but it is still a significant storm that we need to worry about and need to pay attention to.”

Mayor Darby told those in attendance that the evacuation plan had yet to be finalized and she could not tell anyone when evacuation would begin. The Town has been staging equipment and taking the necessary steps to make sure the Town and its residents are safe.

Mayor Darby stated that Colleton County would be sending out tax bills in the near future and the millage rate would need to be addressed. Councilman Moore moved to approve giving the Mayor and Administrator authority to submit the millage change for the Town of Edisto Beach. Councilwoman Smyer seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Mayor Darby opened the meeting to questions from the audience. An audience member asked if there was a suggested evacuation time. Chief Brothers stated that the Town doesn’t issue the evacuation, the Governor does. The question was asked, “Are we required to follow what the Governor says in terms of evacuation?” Mayor Darby said there was no longer a voluntary evacuation, when the Governor issues an evacuation, it is mandatory. Someone asked if a staggered evacuation was possible. Chief Brothers explained that tropical force winds were imminent once the evacuation notice was issued, so staggered evacuation is not feasible. An audience member suggested following Folly Beach’s lead and issue stickers for permanent resident re-entry. Mayor Darby mentioned the problem with gasoline. She told those in attendance which stations on the beach and island have gas, which are out and which are expecting to get some before evacuation. An audience member asked, “Could permanent residents get precedence over vacationers and second home owners?” Mayor Darby stated, “It depends on the circumstances.” Another audience member asked, “When the Governor calls for an evacuation, does that go into effect immediately or does he give you a lag time?” Mayor Darby replied, “Normally they will give you some lag time.” Chief Brothers stated, “Usually he’s going to give you a day.” Audience Member, “So if you got caught off the island, you could still get back on within a limited period of time and are not prevented from coming back on?” Mayor Darby stated that the Town works with residents so that the safety of all is provided.

An audience member asked: "On re-entry, the way it was done before, if it's safe for some people to be on the island, as you said you had people wandering around everywhere, then it should be safe for everybody, or it's not safe for everybody, no one should be on the island. My question to you is, why do you think that you know whether it's safe or not when you can't control the people that you're letting onto the island, because I have full intent on coming back and checking on my property." Mayor Darby stated, "I don't think there's an answer to that." The audience member replied, "I don't either. That's why I wanted to bring it to your attention. This is the United States of America and we are property owners and we have a right to come back and check and inspect our property and if the roads are open to get here, then you should not be able, or this Council should not be able to keep us from checking on our property. If you let one civilian on this island, then you should let all. If you're not going to let a civilian on, don't let any." Mayor Darby: "Do you know how many people it takes to support recovery efforts?" Audience member, "You know I really don't care. That's not a concern that I have. My concern is if you let one civilian on this island then it should be safe for everyone. Because you have no control over them. If you aren't going to let anybody on the island, then nobody comes on the island, unless they are emergency personnel or town employees." Mayor Darby: "To be fair, everybody is worried about their property afterwards. They're frustrated, tempers get flared, everybody's tired, they want to get it done, but my pledge to this Town was to provide for the safety of the Town and its citizens. I cannot control your choices. The Police Chief might, but I'm not." Audience member: "Well that would be fun."

Chief Brothers was asked if the checkpoint would be set up at the Edistonian like it was during Matthew. Chief Brothers affirmed it was. There was some discussion of putting a generator in the Edistonian to run it.

An audience member asked if there was a list of managers that would be granted access to properties. Mayor Darby suggested checking with Patrick Brown. Mr. Brown said his department was preparing a list, in case those people were able to access the beach, but it would still be up to the Police Chief and Council as to when they would be allowed back on the beach. Chief Brothers stated that just because a name was on the list didn't guarantee access.

An audience member asked if there was a website for hurricane information. Mayor Darby stated that the Town tries to keep the website up-to-date, Municipal Clerk Deborah Hargis stated that she is in charge of the Town's Facebook page and it is current.

Councilman Moore moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hornsby and unanimously approved.

The media/public was informed of the date, time and location of the meeting on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL



Deborah Hargis, Municipal Clerk

October 12, 2017