

MINUTES
TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL GOAL-SETTING MEETING
JANUARY 23, 2024
10:00 a.m.

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

Present: Crawford Moore, Mayor; Jerome Kizer, Jay Watts, Joey Bagwell, Robert Renner, Council Members. *Quorum of Council Present*

Other Staff Present: Town Administrator Mark Aakhus, Assistant Town Administrator Dee Stalvey, Town Attorney Maryann Blake, Fire Chief Denney Conley, Police Chief Daniel Seyle, Building Code Administrator Patrick Brown, Utilities Director Patrick Zemp, Special Projects Coordinator Phyllis McElveen, Municipal Clerk Donna Iskra, Municipal Association of South Carolina Field Services Manager Ashley Kellahan (facilitator).

Others Present: Several residents were present at this meeting, including Beverly Sandifer, George Kostell, Patricia Kostell, Tom Hart, Ron Scroggy, and Archie Johnston, and Elizabeth Johnston were also present at this meeting.

2023 Progress Report

Mr. Aakhus presented the 2023 Progress Report to Council, and discussion was held by Council on the items listed (this document is attached to the minutes).

• **Septic Tank Maintenance Program**

- EIOLT Septic System Improvement Grant funding has been accepted, and the Town will assist in outreach efforts and educational materials for beach residents.
- Public educational meetings will be scheduled for property owners.
- Included proper septic tank maintenance information in Monthly Highlights.
- TOEB Building Department ensures DHEC inspections are done prior to new home construction or remodels that increase square footage.
- Council noted the importance of a mandatory septic tank inspection program going forward.

GOAL: Establish the feasibility of a mandatory septic tank inspection program.

• **USACE Projects and Easements**

- Signed PPA 2/2023
- Surveys and appraisals are being completed to present to property owners.
- Beachfront Management Committee has requested a list of beachfront homeowners to communicate information and answer questions.
- Re-surveyed beach access height markers.
- Two informational public meetings were held by USACE for beachfront owners and citizens with online power point, electronic easement line viewer and FAQ fact sheet.

- The Mayor and all Town Council members stressed the importance of obtaining easements as part of this project.

GOAL: Continue to secure easements for the USACE Edisto Beach Nourishment Project.

- **Staffing**

- Conducted a pay study and invested in a significant pay increase for Police and Fire staff.
- Fire Department hired new Assistant Chief and Engineer.
- Police Department secured funding for an additional officer from ATAX for an additional 2-year period.
- Established creative ways to incentivize new hires.

- **Automated Meter Readers**

- Secured \$500,000 for AMRs from State earmarks.
- Applied for Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) funding, but our request was denied.
- The Mayor is working with our state lobbyist and local legislators for additional funding.

GOAL: Secure additional funding for meter reader upgrade.

- **Coastal Flooding Resiliency/Mitigation (next steps)**

- ARC/Billow project completed this year, and a Lagoon Study is currently in progress as part of the BRIC grant.
- Additional public meetings will be held once a progress report is received with recommendations, and Council will ask for input from residents.

- **Notification to businesses regarding backflow prevention certification per Ordinance 2023-02**

- Completed March 2023

- **Storm Debris (reduce cleanup time)**

- Worked with Republic prior to hurricane season to provide additional clean-up service after Labor Day at an additional expense.
- Quicker clean-up resulted after Hurricane Idalia and several smaller storms.

- **Colleton County Transportation Committee Priority List**

- Elevate the causeway.
- Communicate priorities to Mr. Oakley, the Town's representative on the CTC Committee.
- Paving of Jungle Road, Docksite, and Lybrand streets.
- Lobby CTC to fund Docksite Bike Path and the road near McConkey Square.

- **Five-Year Plan/Share Costs with Day Visitors**

- Traffic report was presented with cold and warm season numbers for 2020 through 2023 (see additional notes below)

- Housing report was presented with completed, approved/under construction, and future developments in Ravenel, Hollywood, and Dorchester County (see additional notes below).

Following the aforementioned discussion on the 2023 Progress Report, Council discussed various other items as noted below.

New EOC/Town Hall

- Mr. Aakhus presented the schematic design and the total project cost breakdown for the EOC/Town Hall. Several different conceptual designs were discussed and options on possible changes should construction costs increase outside of the budgeted amount. Rosenblum Coe Architects, Inc. have built-in significant contingencies. Mayor Moore stated we will not exceed our \$10 million budget.
- Mr. Aakhus noted once the next set of design documents are received in late summer, the project will go out for bid and Gantt charts will be in place. Barring any delays, the projected completion date is Fall 2025.

GOAL: Develop a bid timeline for the EOC/Town Hall project.

Water Meter Readers

- Mr. Zemp discussed the differences between the AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) and AMR (Automatic Meter Reading). Both would be able to detect leaks in a timelier manner than what we currently have in place. However, there is a significant cost difference between the two systems. The AMR is between \$700,000 and \$850,000 while the AMI is upwards of 1.1 million. The AMR system would require a drive-by to pick up data while the AMI will ping off a tower. Both would interface with our current InCode system for more efficient billing.
- AMI would provide homeowners with real-time usage.
- Both systems would benefit the Town and the residents by reducing billing errors, increasing usage information, reducing the cost of meter reading, and allowing customers to pay monthly.
- Mayor Moore stated this may encourage online payments.
- Meter replacements would take approximately 30 days.
- Mayor Moore stated the Town needs a system we can grow into, and our current system is outdated. We have demonstrated the Town's need to the State for additional funding for this project.

GOAL: Secure additional funding for meter reader upgrade.

Civic Center Parking Lot

- Mr. Aakhus noted there are two viable options: re-gravelling or re-paving the lot, except for the handicap parking spaces. Ideally, the entire lot needs to be broken up and redone. The Town receives money from Colleton County each year, but it is ultimately the Town's responsibility to maintain it.
- Mr. Renner stated there is an elevation issue with the parking lot.
- Mr. Bagwell noted, if we raise elevation, the water run off would affect surrounding businesses unless it could be directed to the retaining pond in the rear of the building.

- Mayor Moore suggested addressing the handicap parking spots as well due to the water settling there and causing them to be slippery.

GOAL: For the next budget cycle, obtain a quote on paving options for the parking lot, which will also take into account the elevation issues and the handicap parking spots.

Jungle Road Repaving Design

- Discussion was held regarding conceptual design changes as per Edisto Beach Recreational Master Plan, pages 104 and 105. The two options were discussed: (a) shift the center line towards the beach with a rumble strip down the center and a shared bike path on the far side, (b) with a second option of a median in the center with bike paths on both sides of the road with the recommendation of the bike path extending the entire length of Jungle Road.
- Mayor Moore stated this should be done with minimal disturbance and no intrusion onto properties but simply reclaim the area used previously.
- Mr. Renner shared his concern regarding golf carts, and if there would be a safety issue with bikers, walkers, and golf carts occupied the same space.
- Council preferred Option B, acknowledging the urgency of making a decision since DOT has the repaving scheduled.

GOAL: Finalize the Jungle Road Improvement Plan and have the Town Administrator give DOT the go ahead to begin construction.

Dog Park Discussion

- Discussion was held on the most suitable location for a dog park for both residents and visitors. It was noted Burley Lyons Park had been a possible site, but it was determined to be too small with inadequate parking.
- The over-flow parking area at Bay Creek Park would be an option, as this location is within walking distance for some or most of our residents and visitors. Some modifications would need to be made to comply with minimum guidelines, such as fencing, ground cover, and retention areas. There is some regulation regarding the amount of space needed for size and number of dogs.
- Mayor Moore stated that it is imperative this space be dual use and not interfere with current activities at the park.
- Chief Seyle questioned the Town's liability in the event a person or another dog was bitten, or a dog got out of the enclosure and was injured. Ms. Kellahan responded that steps could be taken to ensure dogs were licensed and vaccinated but it would be difficult to police. The Town's attorney, Ms. Blake, stated that it would be the dog owner, not the Town's responsibility, if any such incidents were to occur.
- Mr. Watts noted that he has researched the cost of building a dog park and it is extremely expensive and considered the option of using the Town's resources to do the work. There is also the question of maintenance and general upkeep.
- Mr. Bagwell noted the loss of the parking would be devastating to local businesses.
- The Civic Center is another possible option as it is a much larger area with plenty of shade, but the concern would be distance from the beach and mosquitoes.

GOAL: Conduct a feasibility study for the location of the dog park.

Housing/Traffic

- Ms. Stalvey reviewed new housing development and traffic data in the Ravenel, Hollywood, and surrounding roads and highways. A number of housing units are scheduled to be built in both Ravenel and Hollywood, as well as in neighboring Dorchester County. All this will affect traffic on Highway 17, 174, and other connecting highways. Some traffic points have increased by double digit percentages over the past few years.
- As for Edisto Beach, Chief Seyle expanded on the local traffic data. Traffic increased by double digits from 2020 – 2023 and continues to increase 12% - 18% every year. Our cold and warm seasons are narrowing and with the additional housing in Ravenel, Hollywood and Dorchester County, we expect more day-trippers in the future.
- Mayor Moore stated that parking will continue to be an issue, not only along Palmetto Boulevard, but on the side streets as well. One solution would be to alert visitors using our electronic message board showing additional parking further down the boulevard, as everyone seems to park within the first few blocks.
- Mr. Watts noted Folly Beach generates a lot of income from parking fees but charging for parking is not the Edisto way, and we are not in a position where we need the funds.
- Chief Seyle stated that approximately 70% of police calls are from the day-trippers yet they typically don't contribute many dollars to the local economy.

Septic Tank Inspections

- Mr. Renner stated that we need to focus on education in dealing with septic tank issues, and the next step would be to obtain a report from DNR to determine if there are any hot spots that need attention. Mr. Zemp noted that DHEC and DNR monitor bacterial levels in the waterways. Mr. Renner asked if it could be narrowed down to just the Town.
- Mr. Brown noted that permits are required for new construction but not when a property changes hands. Mayor Moore discussed having inspections done when a home changes owners. Mr. Zemp commented that it is not possible to enforce a permit held by DHEC and not the homeowners. Mr. Brown stated there are no triggers that notify the Town when properties change hands.
- Ms. Kellahan stated she has done research on what other municipalities have done to develop a baseline and will relay the information back to the Town.
- There was discussion of ways to circumvent issues with possible sewer hookup, and more frequent maintenance of the systems by the homeowner. Mr. Brown stated public outreach was a good place to start. There is a non-profit that works with DHEC, Charleston Waterkeepers, that deals with pollution caused from malfunctioning septic systems. Mr. Aakhus commented that there is SCIIP grant money available to help municipalities with septic tank and sewer system issues.

Keep Edisto Beautiful

- Keep Edisto Beautiful has not been active. The TIDE Committee has done a good job with their projects, but the Mayor and Council believe there would be greater financial opportunities if KEB and the TIDE Committee worked together in the form of a hybrid of the two. Kristi Outlander is currently the Director and has reported to Mr. Aakhus she has still has interest in the organization and would like the opportunity to discuss. Mr. Aakhus noted that it is imperative for the right people to be in place to establish what direction the organization should go.

- Beverly Sandifer, KEB board member, noted that any funds received from grants are to be used in that year or no other requests for grant money will be accepted. She also noted there are a couple of national events that the Town could be involved in on a local level.
- Mr. Kizer has spearheaded the cleanup project along with the TIDE Committee and has made significant progress on beach accesses and parks.

GOAL: Conduct meeting to determine future of KEB/TIDE.

EBPOA

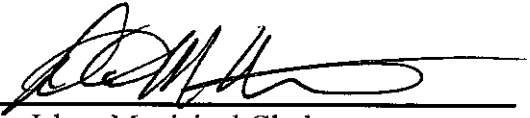
- The EBPOA wants to ensure that the Army Corps storm mitigation program is implemented effectively, and is aesthetically pleasing, and user friendly as well as allowing residents and beachgoers easy access to the beach.
- Increase funding and training for police and fire to keep up with increased demands for service. Mayor Moore noted we have recently evaluated the initiative for these departments and currently have great teams in place.
- Put in place town-regulated septic system rules. Regulate when a house is sold or remodeled, an inspection of the septic tank system be required.
- Put in place a permanent golf cart safety program including regulating the size and speed. Designate June as “golf cart safety month” with varying program implementation features. Chief Seyle noted that local businesses are being asked to donate gift cards to be given to those found “doing the right thing”.
- Ensure the EOC/Town Hall project is designed with public input so it will be aesthetically pleasing and functional and also provide a workplace that can draw and retain talented employees.
- Emphasize strict enforcement of our tree ordinance. Negotiate a tree cutting agreement with Dominion which will allow for reliable electrical power and prohibit overaggressive destruction of the character of the Town.
- Continue to work with proper agencies to monitor the deer population which presents a significant safety risk to drivers on Edisto Beach.
- Continue to support the safety of our turtles.

RECAP

Goals for 2024-2025

- Continue to secure easements for the USACE Edisto Beach Nourishment Project
- Finalize the Jungle Road Improvement Plan and have the Town Administrator give DOT the go ahead to begin construction.
- Develop a bid timeline for the EOC/ Town Hall project.
- Conduct meeting to determine the future of KEB/TIDE.
- Establish the feasibility of a mandatory septic tank inspection program.
- Secure additional funding for meter reader upgrade.
- For the next budget cycle, obtain a quote on paving options for the parking lot, which will also take into account the elevation issues and the handicap parking spots
- Establish a permanent Golf Cart Safety Program and implement it.
- Finalize safety improvements at Jungle Road Park.
- Leverage CTC funds for additional pedestrian/paving needs.
- Conduct a feasibility study for the location of the Dog Park.

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Iskra', written over a horizontal line.

Donna Iskra, Municipal Clerk
February 8, 2024

2023 Progress Report	
Goals	
Septic Tank Maintenance Program	Formally supported EIOLT Septic System Improvement Grant (intended to incorporate a public outreach campaign for island and beach residents/visitors). This grant funding is scheduled to be dispersed soon, and the Town will assist in outreach efforts and educational materials for the beach. Public educational meetings will be scheduled at the Civic Center and Jane Edwards Elementary.
	Included proper septic tank maintenance information in June 2023 and January 2024 Monthly Highlights
	SCDHEC regulates septic systems and requires them to be approved prior to home construction or remodels that increase the size of a home. TOEB Building Dept requires proof of a DHEC permit. Also, Ordinance 2023-11 approved which requires DHEC, not the Town, to inspect septic system failures.
USACE Project and Easements (Develop Strategic Community Awareness and Education Plan)	Signed PPA 02/23
	Re-surveyed beach access height markers
	Worked extensively with Town Council, Beachfront Management Committee, and USACE to develop a presentation to citizens. Included two public meetings, electronic easement line viewer, online powerpoint, FAQ fact sheet, etc.
Staffing	Conducted pay study and invested in a significant pay increase
	FD hired new Asst Chief and Engineer
	PD re-secured funding for an officer from ATAX
Automated Meter Readers	Secured 500k for AMRs from state earmarks
	Applied for additional RIA funding but denied
Coastal Flooding Resiliency/Mitigation (next steps)	ARC/Billow project completed
	Lagoon Study progress report received; next steps include citizen feedback; additional public meeting to present drainage improvement recommendations; and funding/capital planning recommendations.
Notification to businesses regarding backflow prevention certification as per Ordinance 2023-02	Completed March 2023.
Storm Debris (reduce clean up time, ex. Hurricane Ian)	Worked with Republic prior to Hurricane Season and they agreed to provide additional clean-up service after Labor Day; engaged Lyon's Contracting Service to assist; utilized city staff/equipment. Resulted in quicker clean up time after Hurricane Idalia.
Colleton County Transportation Committee Priority List	Communicated priorities to Mr. Oakley who is the Town's representative on the CTC Committee.
	Jungle Road and Docksite Road are planning to be repaved in 2024/2025
	Provide direction to CTC regarding Jungle Road layout
	Lobby CTC to fund Docksite Bike Path and the Town's portion of road near McConkey Square when they pave Docksite Rd.
Five-Year plan to share cost w/ Day Visitors	Traffic report provided
	Housing data

Exhibit A – Town Council Goals for 2024-2025

Edisto Beach Town Council Goal Setting 2024

Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 10:00 AM

Town Hall

Attendees: Mayor Crawford Moore, Councilmembers Jerome Kizer, Joey Bagwell, Bob Renner, and James R. Watts II, Town Administrator Mark Aakhus, Assistant Town Administrator Dee Stalvey, Town Attorney Maryann Blake, Fire Chief Denney Conley, Police Chief Daniel Seyle, Building Code Administrator Patrick Brown, Utilities Director Patrick Zemp, Municipal Clerk Donna Iskra, Municipal Association of South Carolina Field Services Manager Ashley Kellahan (facilitator)

Others Present: Beverly Sandifer, George Kostell, Patricia Kostell, Tom Hart, Ron Scroggy, Archie Johnston, and Elizabeth Johnston

Goals

- Continue to secure easements for the USACE Edisto Beach Nourishment Project
- Finalize the Jungle Road Improvement Plan and have the Town Administrator give DOT the go ahead to begin construction
- Develop a bid timeline for the EOC/Town Hall project
- Conduct meeting to determine the future of KEB/TIDE
- Establish the feasibility of a mandatory septic tank inspection program
- Secure additional funding for meter reader upgrade
- For the next budget cycle, obtain a quote on paving options for the parking lot, which will also take into account the elevation issues and the handicap parking spots
- Establish a permanent Golf Cart Safety Program and implement it
- Finalize safety improvements at Jungle Road Park
- Leverage CTC funds for additional pedestrian/paving needs
- Conduct a feasibility study for possible Dog Park