# DAUFUSKIE ISLAND COUNCIL MEETING January 16, 2018 MINUTES

#### Roll Call

Present:
Steve Hill
Charlie Small
Deborah Smith
James Bays
Sallie Ann Robinson
Darnell Brawner
Maureen Devine

Absent: Chuck Hunter John Schartner

## Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

#### Introduction

Vice Chair Steve Hill introduced Sarah Kimball, Field Representative for Congressman Mark Sanford, who had conducted district office hours at the Mary Fields School prior to the Council meeting.

## Francis Jones Park Update

Council Member Sallie Ann Robinson gave a presentation on the progress of the Francis Jones Community Park. Major points included:

- Proposed more than 15 years ago by native islanders as an opportunity to promote and preserve Gullah heritage
- County agreed to earmark land for purposes of a park consistent with state law relating to parks and recreation facilities
- In 2015 a federal grant was identified for trail construction; county agreed to support grant and to expand use for bathrooms and pavilion

- In 2017- Council's Committee on Cultural and Historical Preservation assumes responsibility for park development (includes Council and public members)
- Park goals: 1) Develop a community park which enriches the quality of life for Daufuskie Island residents and visitors through a variety of recreational activities in a natural setting; 2) Promote and preserve the island's rich Gullah cultural and history; 3) Sustain for future generations of Daufuskie Islanders
- Committee intends for park to be useful for residents and visitors alike.
   County turned down grant from accommodations tax program because panel members didn't think it related enough to tourism.
- Short term projects include: Near Term include Family Cookouts/Picnics;
   Walking/Running Trail; Special Events
- Longer term projects could include: Long Term Options include Children's Play Ground Set; Active Learning Center around trails for Gullah history; Children's Wilderness Camp; Dog Park; Camping Facility; Ball Park
- Ability to establish some of the longer term goals, and especially camping facility and ball park, depend on whether or not the dump site is moved to a different site.
- Current Status: Trail, pavilion, sign, and restrooms are completed.
   Electricity is on. Mr. Hunter (serving as contractor) has reported that he is still waiting for final approval by DHEC for use of water.
- Challenges include: 1) Funds Still Needed for Playground, Grills, Gullah history/cultural sites, etc; 2) Public Perception Problems Re Closeness of "Dump"; Conceptual Master Plan will be helpful for future grant opportunities (\$5000 Proposal by M. Brock Designs (Landscaping, Playground location, etc). Ms. Robinson is working with Mr. Bays' Resources Committee on projects; Also, pro bono in-kind contributions may be possible.
- Ms. Robinson urged everyone to go look at the park, and said people will be impressed at how nice it is looking.
- A "ribbon-cutting" event will be held in the Spring and key county, state, and federal officials will be invited. At that time, there will be a dedication of the pavilion, to be named "The Chris and Dave Hutton Memorial Pavilion" in honor of the beloved Daufuskie residents who built it.

## County Property Update

Mr. Hill reported that the Council continues to explore potential options for Council involvement with the county building formerly occupied by the Marshside Mama's and still occupied by the General Store. A meeting was held with attorney Bob Arundell and his counsel was requested relating to the legal and financial implications should the County transfer the property to the Council or another nonprofit entity. Subsequently, a letter was sent by Mr. Arundell to the county's acting administrator communicating the Council's interest in assuming ownership, but set forth specific "due diligence" questions that had to be answered before a decision can be made. The guestions asked included 1) Does the property meet current building codes and if not, what is required to bring it up to code? 2) What is the exact plat of the property in question, and what zoning applies to that area? 3) Will the county allow use of the dock and parking lot for people trying to access the community building? 4) What would be the value of the property, i.e., what would be the property taxes for the facility? Mr. Hill stated that the Council's primary goal is to ensure that the property remain available for the Daufuskie community's benefit.

# 2018 Council Elections Update

Mr. Brawner reported that the candidate applications deadline was postponed by a week because of weather delays in distributing applications. Re election ballots, physical copies will be available at Freeport Store, the Firehouse, School Grounds Coffee Shop, the Melrose postal center, the Haig Point Mansion, and the Bloody Point postal center. Ballots and instructions can also be found on the Council's website. Key dates: Tuesday Jan 30 at 5:00 pm: Candidates Forum. Election is on Saturday, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm at the Mary Fields School.

# **Committee Updates**

Ferry Committee: Mr. Hill reported that the County had finally signed off on the 2017-2018 contract for the public ferry service, and that it wouldn't be too long before discussions would begin for the 2018-2019 contract.

DI Plan and Code Committee - Ms. Smith reported that at the Committee's January 13th meeting, the draft character areas and strategies were discussed. There had been substantial input from the community on these issues,including a community workshop, a special committee meeting, a survey, and emails providing constructive suggestions. There had been some very creative proposals provided by islanders for this part of the review process. The Committee approved the draft character areas and strategies. Re next steps, an update on the Plan Review process is tentatively scheduled to be given at the County Planning Commission's February meeting. (The January meeting was cancelled due to cold weather.) The next meeting of the Committee will be announced shortly, as well as the next workshop meeting. (Update: The next DI Plan and Code Committee will be held on Sunday, February 18th, 3:00 pm at the Mary Fields School.)

Cultural and Historical Committee - Ms. Robinson reported that the Committee is recommending that there be consideration of changing the name of Haig Point Road (the one in the Historic District, not the Haig Point community) to honor someone of historic significance to that area of the island. As an example, Sarah Grant. She said the issue had first come to her attention when tourists asked her why a road appeared to be named after a private community not available to the general public. Ms. Robinson said that much would be involved in changing a road change, and that community input was needed as well as research into the mechanics of changing a road's name. She said that one issue would be that people owning property on the affected road would need to be contacted. Ms. Robinson moved for the adoption of the following motion, the motion was seconded by Mr. Bays:

"The Council supports the efforts of the Cultural and Historical Preservation Committee to explore changing the name of the Historic District's main road, Haig Point Road, after a person important to the Island's history. The committee's efforts will include reaching out to the Daufuskie community to determine their views on this issue, and also researching the process necessary for a road name change."

There was discussion by the Council Members, with Mr. Small expressing concern about the motion, and Ms. Smith and Mr. Bays expressing support for further study, including community input, by the Committee. The motion was passed by a 6-1 vote.

### **Emergency Preparedness Report**

Mr. Brawner serves on a Disaster Planning Committee, sponsored by the Daufuskie Island Community Foundation. He provided a report on the Committee's recommendations for individual emergency preparedness strategies. This report will be posted on the Council's website in the near future.

#### Public Forum

The following are issues/questions raised by various community representatives:

Comment: Please ask the county to bring over a road grader, because the dirt roads are in bad condition since the rains. Also, repair work is needed for Haig Point Road re potholes.

Response: The Council will pass this request to Mr. Schartner (Roads Committee Chair) who will probably contact the county's Public Works Department.)

Comment: Re the building at the county dock, it makes sense to take time to determine the best use of the building, and there should be special consideration of the original purpose of the building, i.e., for use by the community for various purposes. Need to take a thoughtful approach.

Response: Recommendation duly noted.

Comment: Re the trash and park issues, it makes sense to focus on the One Island Solution.

Response: Recommendation duly noted.

Comment: The County's motivation for wanting to see the building formerly occupied by Marshside Mama's was a reluctance to continue

overseeing a business selling alcohol. Since the restaurant is closed, that is now a moot issue. So why is the DI Council still involved?

Response: We believe there were other reasons that were the basis for the county's decision to divest itself of the building. The DI Council now needs to determine if we want to be "in the line of fire" re responsibility for the property.

Comment: But has it been determined for sure that the County no longer wants to building since the alcohol issue is not longer relevant?

Response: No, we will attempt to do so.

Comment: Where in the Council's charter or by-laws does it say the Council should be involved in owning property or a business? It seems that this is a quasi-governmental enterprise, and not appropriate for the Council to be involved.

Response: W do not believe there is anything to prohibit the Council from taking responsibility for a property. The Council first became involved when the County announced plans to sell the property last summer, and a great number of islanders expressed strong opposition to letting the property go into private hands. The Council's primary interest in this matter is ensuring that it continues to be a benefit to the community, regardless of how the ownership or responsibility is structured.

Comment: It's important to find out what the county's position is since the restaurant closed.

Response: We will be asking that question of the county.

Comment: Interested in purchasing the building to start a restaurant. Council needs to move very quickly, because the tourist season will soon be here.

Response: We need to do due diligence. The ball is in the county's court and they can be slow, unfortunately.

Comment: There was an earlier suggestion of a public forum to determine ideas for use of the property. Is that public forum going to take place?

Response: Stay tuned...you will probably be hearing about such a forum in the near future.

Comment: Again, it's important to act quickly in order to capitalize on the high season.

Response: Comment duly noted.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Hill at 7:05 pm.