



COOL. COASTAL. FAR FROM ORDINARY.

**Council**

Joe DeVito  
*Mayor*

Darryl Owens  
*Mayor Pro Tempore*

Jerry Ashmore  
Mary Beth Heyward  
Kevin Phillips

Van Willis  
*Town Manager*

T. Alan Beach  
*Chief of Police*

Jeffrey S. Coppinger  
*Operations*

Noah Krepps  
*Planning*

**Minutes**

**Council Meeting**

**Port Royal Town Hall, Yvonne C. Butler Council Chambers, 700 Paris Avenue**

**August 9, 2023**

**Members Present:** Mayor Joe DeVito, Council Member Darryl Owens, Council Member Jerry Ashmore, Council Member Kevin Phillips

**Member Absent:** Council Member Mary Beth Heyward

**Staff Present:** Town Manager Van Willis, Fire Chief Tim Ogden, Police Major Ron Wekenmann, Director of Administrative Services Brooke Plank-Buccola, Planning Director Noah Krepps, Town Clerk Lisa Graham

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor DeVito called the Council Meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Council Member Phillips led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. INVOCATION**

Council Member Owens led the Invocation.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Minutes from the Council Workshop of July 5, 2023**
- B. Minutes from the Council Meeting of July 12, 2023**

Council Member Ashmore made a motion to approve the minutes from the Council Workshop of July 5<sup>th</sup> and the Council Meeting of July 12<sup>th</sup>. Council Member Owens seconded the motion. The motion was

carried by unanimous vote.

**V. PRESENTATION**

- A. "Off the Eaten Path" – Nancy Plank & Ashlee Houck**
- B. Port update**
  - i. Safe Harbor – Marina**
  - ii. Beach Company – Bluff Neighborhood**

Nancy Plank, Chairperson of Greater Beaufort Port Royal Convention Visitors Bureau and Ashlee Houck, President of the Beaufort Area Hospitality Association gave a presentation on "Off the Eaten Path" a self-guided event that you can participate in from August 17<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> showcasing Port Royal restaurants.

Sheaffer Watt gave an update on the demolition and future plans that Safe Harbor has for the Marina. See presentation.

Council Member Ashmore asked for clarification for the slab and the demo of building A and hotel plans that were mentioned. Mr. Watt answered that it was determined that the hotel was not going to be built, instead they were going to use it for boat operations. Council Member Ashmore asked for definition of "boat operations." Mr. Watt said it would consist of moveable racks, any sort of boat work needed, be it a paint job or a motor swapper, boats would be pulled out of the water and worked on the concrete slab and put back in the water once complete. Council Member Ashmore wanted more information on boat slab E. Mr. Watt stated it would be open dry racks on either side of the existing concrete slab. They will be stacked as defined in the building agreement, which is 48 feet above grade, so not higher than the existing dry stack, accessible by forklift and open without cover for now, but it is still in the design phase.

Council Member Owens wanted to know what the long-term plans for the cranes that are currently on the property were. Mr. Watt responded that once the power lines are down the blue crane will be moving around the property and not such an eyesore.

Mayor DeVito furthered with what is the plan for them to stop building the docks. Mr. Watt said once they get approval to build the Port Royal docks, currently it is in the permitting phase with the Army Corps of Engineers. It has been designed and submitted, once approved they will construct the Port Royal docks. Mayor DeVito asked how many more docks will be constructed and what is the timeline, which he stressed he had asked for that specific information to be included in this evening's update. Mr. Watt said he would contact him once he had an answer.

Council Member Phillips thanked Mr. Watt for the presentation and looks forward to future updates. He asked what percentage of the building A and B is designated for boat yard operations. Director Krepps responded that it is based on the land use allowed in the PUD, which is the regulatory document for the whole property. There are six different port village districts and dry stack facilities are not allowed north of building A on this site plan.

Council Member Owens mentioned that there had been talk of tent-like structures used for boat repairs. Carla Ferguson with Safe Harbor confirmed that boats of a significant size that need repair work and

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require encapsulation would be done in a temporary structure. That would be considered boatyard functions and done at building A on the terminal pad.

JC Darby with The Beach Company and Bill Harris with Allison Ramsey Architects gave an update on the prospective future residential development of the Bluff Neighborhood. See presentation.

Council Member Phillips thanked the presenters and looks forward to more updates. He asked when referring to civic space does it mean open to the public. Bill Harris confirmed that it is a place meant for everyone. Council Member Phillips asked what the time frame of renters would be, a day, a month, six months a year. JC Darby responded that they were looking for annual rentals. Council Member Phillips asked what the Beach Company's time frame was for the closing. Mr. Darby could not commit to a timeframe.

Council Member Ashmore asked for a more specific closing time frame, be it 60 days, 20 days, 6 months, or 6 years. Mr. Darby responded that it would not be 6 years. There are dates in the development agreement that they must meet, but he could not commit to a date.

Manager Willis asked Mr. Darby if you were to close what is the timeline for construction. He responded that the first thing that would have to be built would be a spine road and then the build out. Manager Willis inquired as to what is the difference between conventional single-family construction versus a community that they are attempting to build, assuming it would be tighter timeline. Mr. Darby agreed and added that from start to finish the neighborhood would take 16 to 18 months, more likely an 18-month construction schedule, but not sure what the timeline would be for the spine road or infrastructure. Mr. Harris added that if you look at similar neighborhoods like Habersham or New Point, they are 30 years in and still not completely built out.

Council Member Phillips asked if the Ribaut Village would be like the proposed Bluff neighborhood. Mr. Darby answered that it would be determined based on the success of the Ribaut Village which is predicated on the success of the Bluff neighborhood.

Council Member Ashmore offered additional comments. He said that throughout the presentation Mr. Darby had mentioned the Beach Company would be doing a voluntary clean up and would like confirmation. Mr. Darby said the entire property top to bottom would be a voluntary clean up. Everything that Port Royal is doing, the Beach company is doing, and the port property is in a VC. It's called a VC, a voluntary clean-up program. Council Member Ashmore also inquired whether they will mediate soil conditions. Mr. Darby said it would be more than that. He wishes he had his environmental consultant to properly answer this but, basically what happens is DHEC gives what he calls the rules of the road. They take the soil contaminants, and study them to determine the use restrictions to develop and how to dispose of the soil. For example, if they left any unexposed dirt in the Village they would have to bring in one-foot top coat of clean fill to any exposed area within the Bluff Village neighborhood. Everywhere that there is civic space on the map, they will need to bring in an offsite one-foot clean soil from another location which is excess cost but that is all part of the VC. Volunteering to clean up the property to have the ability to develop it. Once completed, they inspect and send out a no further action letter which indicates they have obligated the terms of the environmental conditions. Council Member Ashmore thanked them for using local contractors. Director Krepps confirmed that the land development agreement allowed for 575 homes. Mr. Darby commented

that the two parcels are zoned residential not even achieving half of what they are allowed and twice the civic space. Council Member Ashmore said it looked like there were 239 units planned with 428 parking spaces. Mr. Darby confirmed and added that they have really applied the feedback that they received from Mayor DeVito, Manager Willis and Director Krepps.

Mayor DeVito announced that Bill Harris is the Town's architect, and by his association with the Bluff Village they would need to have another architect review the plans. He stated his concerns regarding overparking but feels that having two parking spaces per unit is not enough. Mr. Harris felt that there was some truth to that concern, but with the one- and two-bedroom units tenants would be less likely having two cars. Both Mr. Darby and Mr. Harris reiterated that this was simply an update and a work in progress.

Council Member Phillips asked for clarification regarding rent to own, do they get commitments from renters to a specific design or do you build them all and rent them out. Mr. Darby said it was no different if you had a leasing office and someone goes to rent an apartment. They select the model that best suits their family. Mr. Harris mentioned that this market is important and addresses the "missing middle," which are new policemen, firemen, teachers, nurses, people moving to the area that are taking these jobs. Houses are expensive. So, some smaller units could address that. Council Member Phillips asked if there is a guarantee that they would stay at a certain rent. Mr. Darby did not know if that was achievable, but that is why they have a diverse mix of options.

Mayor DeVito complimented the fact that there are no driveways crossing the the Spanish Moss Trail that would run through the neighborhood. A modification from the last update. Manager Willis added that they did receive a grant that would help with the construction of that portion of the trail including the stormwater, roughly \$1.1 million dollars.

Council Member Ashmore thanked the presenters and asked for both parties to give regular updates to Council.

## **VI. COUNCIL BRIEFING**

Manager Willis stated that there was nothing new to brief Council.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**At this time, the Mayor will recognize members of the audience who have submitted speaker forms to address the Council on agenda items. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes.**

There were no comments from the public.

## **VIII. FIRST READING**

**Ordinance 2023-12. An ordinance amending the business license ordinance of the Town of Port Royal to update the class schedule as required by act 176 of 2020.**

Council Member Owens made a motion to approve the first reading of ordinance 2023-12. Council Member Ashmore seconded the motion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

**Ordinance 2023-13. An ordinance to repeal Chapter 19 Traffic and Motor Vehicles, Article II Stopping, Standing and Parking, Section 19-31 Control of parking in public parking areas or private parking areas under the jurisdiction of the police department, and replace with Sections 19-31 – 19-41.**

Council Member Ashmore made a motion to approve the first reading of ordinance 2023-13. Council Member Owens seconded the motion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

**IX. COUNCIL ACTION**

**A. Memorandum of Understanding Between the Town of Port Royal and Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) - Lowcountry Installation Resilience Review Implementation.**

Council Member Owens made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Town of Port Royal and Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG). Council Member Ashmore seconded the motion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

**X. IMPORTANT DATES**

Manager Willis read the following important dates.

- A. Saturday, August 12, 2023 – Fall Street Concert Series – Bennett Matteo Band at 6 PM**
- B. Tuesday, August 15, 2023 – Redevelopment Commission Meeting at 4:30 – 5:30 PM**
- C. Thursday, August 17, 2023 – Joint Council Meeting at 6 PM, Town Hall**
- D. August 17 – 27, 2023 – Off the Eaten Path**
- E. Monday, August 21, 2023 – Municipal Election Commission Meeting at 5 PM**
- F. Monday, August 21, 2023 – Metropolitan Planning Commission Meeting at 5 PM at 1911 Boundary Street**
- G. Saturday, August 26, 2023 – Fall Street Concert Series – New Orleans Suspects at 6 PM**
- H. Monday, September 4, 2023 – Labor Day – Town Offices will be closed**

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**At this time, the Mayor will recognize members of the audience who have submitted speaker forms to address the Council on non-agenda items. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes.**

Ronald Jackson is concerned with an easement and traffic in his neighborhood.

Danny Norwood, John Smith, David Stillwell, Tim Ball, Josh Stone, Jay Turner, Daniel Haun, Jaime Gardner, and Mark Wyler all expressed concern regarding the upcoming Pride Festival at Live Oak Park.

Kat Bray would like some changes to the bulk pick-up practices and to increase liter citations.

Samuel Smalls is frustrated that Casablanca/John Parker Park has not been renovated.

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Pamela Courtney thanked Carla Ferguson, General Manager of the Port Royal Safe Harbor, for taking the initiative with the preservation of Steven Mallet Park.

**XII. COUNCIL COMMENT**

Council Member Phillips thanked everyone for attending and the presenters.

**XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. Discussion of current state of Town boards and commissions**
- B. Discussion regarding a federal procurement of a prospective health care facility within the Town of Port Royal**

Council Member Ashmore made a motion to enter executive session to discuss the current state of Town boards and commissions and a federal procurement of a prospective health care facility within the Town of Port Royal. Council Member Owens seconded the motion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Council entered executive session at 8:20 PM

Council exited executive session at 9:00 PM

**XIV. POSSIBLE ACTION ON ITEMS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

No action was taken at this time.

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Graham  
Town Clerk

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (a)(d)(e), as amended, notification of regular meetings was given at the beginning of the calendar year. A copy of the agenda was posted on the Town Hall's bulletin board and website [www.portroyal.org](http://www.portroyal.org) twenty-four hours prior to the meeting. A copy of the agenda was given to the local news media and requested public on file.

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