

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Municipal Center Council Meeting Room
December 14, 2020; 9:00 AM

MINUTES

I. Call to Order: Mayor Labriola called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Present at the meeting: John D. Labriola, *Mayor*
Maryanne Connelly, *Councilmember*
John Moffitt, *Councilmember*
Dr. Scott Parker, *Councilmember*
Dan Prickett, *Councilmember*

Also Present: Stephanie Tillerson, *Town Administrator*
John Taylor, *Planning Director*
Petra Reynolds, *Town Clerk*
Stephanie Braswell Edgerton, *Communications Manager*
Charles Lipuma, *Kiawah Resident*
Paul Roberts – *via Zoom*

II. New Business:

A. Discussion of Charleston County Main Road Corridor: Segment C (Bohicket Road Improvements – Maybank Highway to Betsy Kerrison Parkway)

In the past week, Mayor Labriola stated that Mr. Taylor prepared a series of questions in response to the request for questions/comments on the Charleston County Main Road Corridor- Segment C road improvement project. As part of the project's public comment period, the County held a virtual public meeting on December 10th. All questions/comments from interested parties are to be submitted to the County by December 16th and as an interested party, the Town will be submitting comments. Mayor Labriola indicated that the workshop's purpose was to provide the Council an opportunity to review the information and offer feedback on the comments Mr. Taylor prepared prior to submission to the County. Both Mr. Roberts and Mr. Lipuma, also in attendance at the workshop, have a great deal of experience and have been involved in improving Johns Island roads for many years.

Mr. Taylor stated after the information presented was reviewed, any feedback would be included in a more formal document, he would send members before submission to the County. He indicated that after attending the public session with the County and their consultants, he learned there is still much data that needs to be obtained before deciding which alternative would be best for Kiawah, Seabrook, and Johns Island. He noted that after the December collection of questions/comments are received, it is expected that the alternatives will be narrowed, adjustments made, and then re-presented for public review.

Mr. Taylor discussed in detail the potential "next steps" for the Town that include:

- Bolstering Community engagement –
 - Encouraging residents and property owners to get involved within the public review process by submitting comments and questions to Charleston County.
- Scripting the narrative –
 - Johns Island Taskforce, a collection of a cross-section of Johns Island stakeholders with representation from Kiawah, Seabrook, and Wadmalaw, large and small property owners, Coastal Conservation League, Lowcountry Land Trust, City, and County Planners, and Transportation.
- Bridge Building –

- Work toward agreement on points that benefit all entities, including Johns Island, Kiawah, and Seabrook; and
- Understanding Political Will –
 - Driver – Planned Development and Subdivisions on Johns Island

Along with Mr. Roberts and Mr. Lipuma, Councilmembers engaged in an in-depth discussion of the questions Mr. Taylor prepared. Some of the discussion points included:

- John Island Taskforce is a diverse group with a primary focus on conservation to mitigate future development. Still, the Town may need to find a way to compromise with the Taskforce on issues for the greater good.
- Approval of the complete project (Segments A, B, and C) was based on the criteria that it must alleviate the traffic and congestion on Main and Bohicket Roads. Traffic studies have determined that without the I-526 Extension, Segments A and C must be completed and are funded.
- Problems posed by the Alternatives and the impact of traffic studies on the Alternatives.
- The report that was done by Mr. Roberts, “Using the CHATS Model to Understand Alternatives on Johns Island,” and the information summarizing three alternatives presented at the workshop. History of the “Sea Island Greenway” and issues encountered over the past years in obtaining approval.
- Consideration of Alternative 3 or 4 or a Cross Island Parkway as an alternative supported by facts, and appears to relieve traffic on Bohicket, saves money in proposed construction costs, and does not create an interim construction crisis on River Road or Bohicket. Still supporting I-526. Preserve the integrity of Bohicket Road.
- Encourage everyone to submit comments by December 16th
- Additional metrics that are needed for review.

Mr. Taylor summarized the points to be incorporated to maximize opportunities:

1. Funding is in place
2. Wanting to protect the cultural and historical integrity of Bohicket Road
3. The alternative having the least interim interruption of everyday traffic by construction
4. Wanting to identify the metrics specifically on traffic data - where the traffic is generated
5. Moving forward with the support of the I-526 extension
6. The number of people impacted should be minimized
7. The willingness of the County to engage property owners
8. Not advocating for sprawling development on the southern end of Johns Island
9. Preservation of cultural sites

Mayor Labriola suggested that once the comments are approved and sent, they are released to the community and encourage support for the Town's position. It was suggested that both Seabrook Island and the Johns Island Taskforce also receive a copy.

Taking into consideration all feedback from the workshop and consensus of the Town Council, Mr. Taylor submitted the following:

The Town of Kiawah Island believes reducing congestion and providing necessary traffic relief along the Main Road, and Bohicket Road corridor is critical for the safety of individuals living and working on Kiawah.

Additional data metrics are necessary to determine a Preferred Alternative that will be most effective in relieving traffic along the Main Road and Bohicket Road corridor. It is important that the County provides more data metrics as Level of Service, estimated costs, the number of parcels impacted including acreage and potential displacements, heirs' property affected, number of grand trees and canopies loss from each of the alternatives being considered. The makeup of traffic, the utility of the

Main Road and Bohicket Road corridor, and their travel patterns entering and exiting Johns Island are critical metrics in making any decision.

Charleston County should prioritize preserving the existing character of Bohicket Road. Its natural character and historical significance cannot be replicated. Significant disruption to the canopy and removal of many grand trees along Bohicket Road would destroy the scenic highway that provides an important experience to Islanders. Additionally, the potential displacement of long-standing residents and businesses along Bohicket Road would negatively impact the cultural dynamic of Bohicket Road to Johns Island.

We recognize the current timetable of the Mark Clark Extension (MCX) is unpredictable, but its development should not impede on Johns Island traffic improvements since relief is needed now. However, with Charleston County's assumption that the MCX will be built, which the Kiawah community supports, we believe a Preferred Alternative should exist to remain a viable option for a future connection if possible.

The large workforce and employment center that Kiawah and Seabrook communities are to the area must also be considered in aiding relief along the corridor.

The Preferred Alternative should provide the least disruption in the construction of any road enhancements and the least impact to daily traffic patterns for Johns Islanders. The overall time it would take to provide necessary traffic relief must be a critical consideration.


Analyzing previous data metrics and current data will demonstrate that a limited access cross-island concept will be most effective and least impactful to the area. As the alignment of a new cross-island road would be built primarily along undeveloped lands, which would save a significant number of trees, limit disruptions to existing development and could be completed in less time than other alternatives.

In conclusion, we believe that developing a limited access cross-island concept must be given careful consideration. Charleston County should prioritize limited access to ensure its effectiveness and to prevent further development on the southern end of Johns Island. Charleston County and the City of Charleston should work to codify the Urban Growth Boundary. This should be completed before the development of any traffic improvements on Johns Island. This will guide where urban/suburban development and rural development occurs on Johns Island.

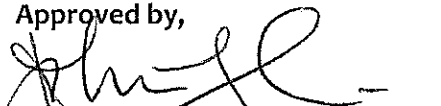
III. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at the meeting at 10:18 am.

Submitted by,


Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved by,


John D. Labriola, Mayor

1-8-2020
Date