



Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP Monday, January 27, 2025, 1:00 PM Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the workshop to order at 1:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Alan Perry, Mayor, Alex Brown, Ward 1, Mayor Pro-Tempore; Patsy Brison, Ward 2; Steve DeSimone, Ward 3, Tammy Becker, Ward 4; Steve Alfred, Ward 5; Melinda Tunner Ward 6.

Adoption of the Agenda

Ms. Brison moved to approve. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Workshop Discussion

Discussion of William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project

Marc Orlando addressed Council provide some background regarding the reason for the workshop. He stated that as a result of the January 9 workshop, Sean Colin and he were to coordinate a meeting with Beaufort County and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) on several project particulars as a response to Secretary Powell's letter, a response to Senator Davis's letter, as well as a response to the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) letter to Beaufort County. He stated he and Mr. Colin will provide an update on that progress. He noted the importance of outlining the next steps and the critical path that needs to be decided upon by the March 31 deadline. He reminded Council that SCDOT requested clear direction from the Town and the county to move the project forward. He stated it is important that Council collectively address several of the questions posed by the SCDOT, SIB, Senator Davis and the County.

Mr. Orlando stated he will ask Council, if not today, at some point, how the Town should proceed with the development of the Stoney Corridor Master Plan to ensure it complements the larger corridor project. He added that they still have to further explore, calibrate, and identify all of the project elements in a revised memorandum of understanding and memorandum of agreement with Beaufort County.

Mr. Colin proceeded with his presentation.

To advance the project, Town staff has coordinated with Beaufort County staff and South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) staff.

In this regard, Town staff provides the following:

At the January 9th Workshop, Town Council reviewed the availability of project funding and examined recent correspondence from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank, Beaufort County, and Senator Tom Davis. These correspondences are included as Attachments 1, 2, and 3.

Town Council assessed potential funding sources, project decision timelines and deadlines, and the proposed project alignment, ultimately discussing the next steps.

At the Workshop, Town Council directed staff as follows:

- Align project with adopted Guiding Principles.
- Confirm sources and uses of project budget funds.
- Analyze project costs by segment and element and report the findings accordingly.
- Provide clarification regarding the 2018 Beaufort County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Referendum.
- Develop a project timeline with key milestones to ensure alignment with the March 31, 2025, deadline.
- Establish a Stoney Corridor Master Plan.

Since the January 9, Town Council Workshop, the following have occurred:

A January 21, 2025, meeting with the Town of Hilton Head Island staff, Beaufort County staff, and SCDOT leadership and staff was scheduled and then postponed due to weather conditions.

A January 21, 2025, Beaufort County Council Workshop was scheduled and then postponed due to weather conditions.

A January 29, 2025 meeting with Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, and SCDOT has been requested to determine project constraints and opportunities.

Town Council Items for Consideration:

The following provides a project update, including project guiding principles, a budget overview, identifies sources and uses of project funds, and provides various next steps that must be resolved prior to the project advancing. These items are as follows:

Align Project with Guiding Principles adopted by Town Council on February 18, 2020:

- Fix the transportation issues in the corridor in a way that improves the safety and quality of life for all residents, workers and visitors to Hilton Head Island.
 - Address transportation needs for natural disasters and resiliency of Island access.
 - Consider future transportation alternatives.
- Improve the safety and quality of life for the residents of the neighborhoods and businesses directly impacted by the US 278 corridor.
 - Stoney.
 - Neighborhoods on Jenkins and Hog Island (including but not limited to Windmill Harbor).
- Have a gateway to and from Hilton Head that the region that will be proud of.
 - Aesthetically pleasing and reflecting the Hilton Head/Low country values.
 - Safe and functional pathways for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Minimizes environmental impacts and enhances the wonderful asset of Pinckney Island.

Sources and Uses Project Funds:

- The William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project is a major infrastructure initiative with a total budget of \$298.53 Million. The project is funded through the following sources:
 - Beaufort County Referendum: \$80 Million
 - Beaufort County Impact Fees: \$21 Million
 - Hilton Head Island Right-of-Way (ROW) Donation: \$3.3 Million
 - Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Guideshare: \$2 Million
 - SCDOT Bridge Funds: \$72.5 Million
 - South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank (SCSIB): \$120 Million
- As the project refinement progresses, project funding sources and uses per the above must be confirmed with Beaufort County, South Carolina Department of Transportation, and South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank.
- Town staff must validate the appropriate use of 2018 Referendum funds as they apply to the project.
- 2018 Transportation Sales and Use Tax Referendum:
 - The sales tax proceeds will be used for the following projects as described and for which an estimated capital cost is stated.
 - Hilton Head Island - US 278 Corridor Traffic Improvements: Repair and/or replace the existing spans of the bridges to Hilton Head Island and other improvements between Moss Creek Drive and Squire Pope Road ... \$80,000,000.

Bridge and Corridor Scope and Cost Alignment Determination:

- To align project funding, review SCDOT Engineers' Opinion of Probable Costs (EOPC) for key project components.
- Town Council and Beaufort County must concur with the bridge, corridor, lane, and intersection designs. This detail will be further discussed and assessed at the Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, and SCDOT meeting referenced above.

Stoney Corridor Master Plan:

- **The Stoney Area Master Plan** is being developed to provide a comprehensive framework for guiding future design, infrastructure improvements, and strategic investments within the Stoney community corridor. This plan is essential to ensuring that development efforts align with the Town's vision and priorities, as outlined in the previously approved Stoney Area Initiative Plan, adopted in 2003. The Master Plan serves as a blueprint to:
 - Identify and prioritize essential infrastructure improvements, such as roadways, utilities, pedestrian pathways, open space and other public infrastructure investments to support the Stoney Historic Community.
 - In conjunction with the Skull Creek District Plan, encourage responsible growth that balances economic opportunities with the preservation of the area's character and community identity.
 - All proposed strategies and improvements are intended to align with the goals and recommendations set forth in the Initiative Plan to maintain consistency with community aspirations.
 - Establishing a clear vision for the area will better position the Town and Beaufort County to secure grants and funding for critical infrastructure and community projects.

Intergovernmental Agreements:

- Finalize Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) with Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island (BC/HHI).
- Finalize Intergovernmental Agreement with Beaufort County and the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank (BC/SCSIB/HHI).
- Confirm the SCDOT Municipal Consent Agreement based on the revised project scope.

Next Steps:

Town staff will continue to coordinate with project stakeholders to finalize cost assessments and scope determinations. Following our meeting with SCDOT, we will provide an update to Town Council with further recommendations and proposed next steps.

Council members made comments, asked questions and had discussion regarding: the need for clarification regarding the cost of the project and where the additional needed funding is going to come from; confirmation a request has been submitted to SCDOT for a breakdown of probably costs on project components; the need for a cost estimate for the westbound projects as well as the eastbound and the need to break it down into the rest of the corridor improvements which were previously included in the \$488 million estimate; the need for a list of segments for the project; the need to include estimates for the causeways which were not included in the \$488 million estimate; the need for clarification as to what amount remains to use from the Windmill Harbour area to Spanish Wells; a request that the Mayor ask each Council member to send him their requests as to what they would like to see on the segmented cost estimates; the need to ensure the Public Service Districts are going to be reimbursed for moving the underground piping that delivers drinking water to the northern part of the Island; confirmation the Town will see that all referendum dollars are legally applied to the project; the need for coordination of specific funding and where the money can be spent; confirmation the SIB agreement goes from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells and the 2018 Referendum goes from Moss Creek to Squire Pope; confirmation the Town will wait until all information required is in hand before another meeting date is scheduled; a request and confirmation that a memo/summary will be distributed to council regarding the upcoming meeting on January 30; the need to inquire regarding the dollar amount of funding committed by the SCDOT for the Community Mitigation package for the Stoney Area; and an expectation the upcoming meeting with the SCDOT will be for information gathering and no commitments.

Each Council member stated their suggestions and thoughts regarding the elements and design suggestions for the bridge.

Jared Fralix of Beaufort County addressed Council and provided some clarity. He stated the SCDOT is looking at three lanes, 12 feet wide with six feet inside and 20 feet outside shoulders which is the three lane bridge that was in Senator Davis's proposal. He stated they feel that in the event of emergency or a future replacement of the westbound spans, that this proposed 3 lane section would be sufficient if there was a need to replace/repair the westbound spans.

He stated the largest controlling factor of the project is that it is federally funded which creates restrictions of which one is the impacts. One of the hopes is that if the project is rebranded, the environmental impact will be considered.

Mr. Fralix was asked to address the issue with the Windmill Harbour traffic light.

Mr. Orlando addressed the question regarding the Windmill Harbour traffic signal being added to the Town's integrated traffic signal system. He stated the County did state the Town could acquire the signal, but it is unfunded and at a minimum would cost \$200,000 to implement. He said he wanted to wait to bring that proposal to Council until after they made decisions regarding the bridge and the

project components. If they added it to the system and then the bridge project eliminated the signal, the funds would be lost. A request was made to obtain the data regarding time saved and traffic flow if the signal was added to the system.

Mr. Fralix explained that the SCDOT wants a clear direction specific to the bridge and if the Town and County cannot give a clear direction on the project, they will make the executive decision of a project themselves to execute a bridge construction in 2027.

Mr. Orlando clarified that what the State is requesting of the County and the County has asked the Town if we are willing to fund the gap in funding based upon the Town's project wish list and if so, how that will be done. They have requested that information by March 31.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment.

Andy Twisdale addressed Council encouraging Council to move forward with the bridge project as suggested by Senator Tom Davis.

Ginny Jackson addressed Council supporting Senator Tom Davis's proposal regarding the bridge.

Christopher Cliffe addressed Council in support of Senator Davis's proposal and advised Council to leave the design of the bridge to the engineers.

Peter Kristian addressed Council in support of Senator Davis's vision for the bridge project. He suggested Council look at some type of separated grade intersection which would move traffic through the corridor safely.

Jim Hall addressed Council encouraging Council to keep the proposed pathways on the bridge design as it is not only a form of recreation, but transportation for our workforce.

David Kimball addressed Council stating if the bridge only has a six foot shoulder, the project will be a failure for bike and pedestrian users. He encouraged Council to keep the pathway in the bridge design.

Frank Babel addressed Council encouraging Council to keep the pathway in the bridge design as it would create safe bike and pedestrian connectivity between the mainland and the Island.

Charles Perry addressed Council stating the Windmill Harbour traffic light is very efficient as it is now. He added that a flyover would be problematic in implementing as well as creating many other problems that would need to be dealt with.

Tom Crews addressed Council stating the traffic light and acceleration lane have made a big difference and have addressed the issue they had previously with access to and from Windmill Harbour.

Richard Bisi addressed Council requesting full transparency and requested Council look at meeting at times other than 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm to accommodate the working residents.

Jocelyn Staigar addressed Council encouraging them to support Senator Davis's proposal.

Beth Drake addressed Council encouraging them to support Senator Davis's proposal.

Steve Baer addressed Council in support of Senator Davis's proposal and encouraged them to and the need to get more data from SCDOT. He added that the plan needs to go to the Cross Island Parkway. He stated the need for maps and diagrams of options. He suggested that MKSK could assist with those items needed.

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

None.

Adjournment

Mr. Brown moved to adjourn. Mr. Alfred seconded. Motion carried. 7-0.

Approved: February 18, 2025


Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk


Alan R. Perry, Mayor

The recording of this Meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov