



Town of Hilton Head Island WILLIAM HILTON PARKWAY GATEWAY CORRIDOR INDEPENDENT REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING Monday, April 22, 2024, 1:00 PM Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Those present were: Mayor Alan Perry, Chairman; Diederik Advocaat; Edward C. Warren, Jr.; Charles P. Walczak, PE; and Willie Young. Absent was: Herbert Ford, Alternate.

2. Approval of the Minutes

a. Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2024 will be approved at the next regular meeting.

Mr. Advocaat stated he had appeared remotely at the April 10, 2024, meeting; however, he had technical issues with his microphone and was unable to pose questions or comments. Therefore, he would like his points to be recorded. **Point 1:** At the last meeting, there was no discussion or opinion made concerning the bridges - one span vs. two spans. If you have a 1 span, 11 lane bridge, is that technically feasible or make sense? **Point 2:** The on-grade bypass option needs to be given serious consideration. It is less obtrusive environmentally, has less impact on Stoney, can be a quick connection to the Cross Island Parkway, has the lowest cost option, and cuts the commute time. **Point 3:** The grading matrix produced in my opinion is really comparing apples and oranges, and you cannot add numbers and come to a conclusion. **Point 4:** The bike lane - a cost/benefit analysis should be done, its usage, and whether funds for a bike lane can be better allocated elsewhere. **Point 5:** The adaptive management system - you are still working in clusters at the end of 278, there has to be a way these 2 can be connected during peak hours to create a better flow, and disabling the Windmill Harbour light during peak hours should be explored. **Point 6:** I question whether the bow tie alternative would actually work, and should be tested in your simulation models. **Point 7:** What is the cost picture for the elevated bypass, does it makes sense at all, and has it been discussed with SCDOT as a potential solution, and what is their opinion? **Point 8:** The \$425M which has been mentioned as a number, which is a 50% increase. Where does that come from and how is that put together. All these points I would like Lochmueller to consider, take them into account, and where applicable, add onto the simulation models.

3. Unfinished Business

Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager - Community Development, thanked everyone for their appearance on such a short notice. He explained that at the last meeting Lochmueller

had presented 4 viable Alternatives to advance for additional evaluation. A comparative assessment was presented for each of those Alternatives, and the Committee asked for additional information related to cost, and property impact to both public and private lands. Lochmueller has developed that additional information, along with a third element relating to the construction period, based on their professional opinion of the project. He turned the presentation over to Nate Nohren and his Lochmueller team, with Brad Strader and Brian Kinzelman available remotely.

Mr. Colin clarified for the Committee that with regard to Mr. Advocaat's points, the matter of additional funding for this project is not within the scope of work for Lochmueller.

a. Additional Details on Property Impacts, Cost, and Construction Period for Alternatives.

Nate Nohren, Project Manager for Lochmueller, introduced his team joining the meeting remotely: Kate Swinford and Michelle Romaine, Traffic Engineering Leads; Chad Costa, Chief Environmental Engineer; Lorne Jackson, Chief Roadway Engineer. He noted this meeting is designed to present the additional information requested at the April 10 meeting, which included delineating between public and private parcels, providing high order of magnitude cost estimates as well as estimates for the construction duration, and a matrix incorporating everything provided.

Mr. Nohren presented slides of the Alternatives, which slides are a part of the presentation contained in the agenda packet. He briefly outlined on the slides Alternative #1, Alternative #2, Alternative #3, and Alternative #4. He pointed out the travel time comparison when compared to 2045 No Build for each Alternative completed in Synchro for the Hilton Parkway corridor between Moss Creek and Indigo Run. Questions from the Committee members were answered by Mr. Nohren, Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Colin. Discussion ensued about whether SCDOT or Beaufort County has reviewed the Lochmueller plans. Mr. Colin reminded the Committee that a part of the scope for Lochmueller was a provision to refrain from any communication with the County or SCDOT during the engineering evaluations and assessments until the Committee identifies Alternatives to be advanced, at which point any design modifications would then be shared with both the County and SCDOT for consideration. He also raised the issue of where additional funding would come from above the original project cost for the deficient bridge and funding sources from the State Infrastructure Bank, grant, and referendum, leaving a current deficit of \$100M+. While there have been communications, he noted none were specifically about SCDOT vetting all of the engineering solutions. Mr. Colin indicated he would like to have the benefit of this meeting's results and the Committee's position so that he can schedule further conversations this week.

Mr. Nohren concluded his presentation with slides detailing the additional right of way required for each Alternative, with estimated cost ranging from \$426M to \$575M, and estimated construction duration ranging from 36 to 48 months, with the resulting scoring and ranking. A lengthy discussion followed concerning the scoring system and matrix, how impact was determined for additional right of way acreage needed, difficulties and

delays that could result, whether a sufficient right of way exists in Stoney to accommodate a larger paved roadway, and the review being made Lochmueller's structural engineers of the seismic study, with the initial analysis indicating no feasible way to retrofit an existing bridge to meet SEE requirements.

Mr. Colin stated that after the last meeting when Lochmueller presented its evaluation and comparative assessment of the alternatives, the goal was to identify an Alternative that would be the preferred Alternative to put through the VISSIM model so they could then perform the deeper analysis and evaluation, and they could move beyond the current study area, as well, to look at the full end-to-end that was requested down to Sea Pines Circle and to Wilborn and Indigo Run. Therefore, with the additional information presented today as requested plus construction duration, they would like the Committee to weigh in on the Alternative or Alternatives to continue to move forward and advance. He asked for the Committee's feedback at this time. Each Committee member stated their current choices and reasoning involved, but no clear consensus was reached.

Discussion continued among the Committee members and Mr. Nohren concerning keeping a 4-lane bridge, and Mr. Nohren indicated the analyses done by them and other studies reviewed, indicate this is not practical. Mayor Perry noted there are questions concerning whether the State Infrastructure Bank, the State House, or other source would grant the additional funding for the Alternative chosen, and conversations with these entities needed to be held soon. Mr. Colin agreed that with a potential shortfall in the current funding, and the failure of the Committee to narrow down the Alternatives for Lochmueller to proceed into the VISSIM model, it would be appropriate to share the Alternatives presented by Lochmueller with Beaufort County officials and SCDOT to determine feasibility and funding availability. The Committee members indicated their support for that plan, with Mr. Colin to schedule meetings and report back soon.

4. Appearance by Citizens

No citizens have requested to appear before the Committee regarding items not on the agenda. No comments were received through the Open Town Hall Portal.

A citizen remarked that the traffic lights are not synchronized nor optimized at Spanish Wells and Squire Pope Road intersections. He also mentioned that cost/value for benefit gained in minutes should be a consideration.

Christopher Cliffe noted he had attended 32 committee meetings since November 2018 chaired by David Johnson, 12 or more joint broadcasts of Beaufort County and the Town, numerous Town Council meetings, and at no time during those meetings until recently has cost come up as a determining factor. He questioned how the construction duration was computed, where the idea of pedestrian and bike paths originated, whether construction costs were based on 2022 numbers, and whether there were certain aspects of the bridge that would be the Town's responsibility.

An Indigo Run resident stressed the need for a fair, transparent, and independent analysis

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free from political manipulation, but he questioned whether that is the case. He stated too much attention is being placed on an oversize bridge and not enough on traffic lights, which are the real cause of our congestion problems. Better and cheaper options, with less community impact on the Gullah community, have been suggested and ignored. The Town's decision will be one of the most consequential decision in years and will impact our Town for decades.

Louise Miller Cohen, a native of Hilton Head Island, stated God had given her a job to keep the Gullah Geechee culture alive on Hilton Head Island. All that is remaining is the land left by their ancestors and passed down to the current generation. She expressed her gratitude to everyone who feels their pain, and asked the members to put themselves in their shoes and help them keep their land, their culture, and their community.

5. New Business

None.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was declared adjourned at 2:42 PM.

Approved: June 12, 2024

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