



SURFSIDE BEACH TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
CIVIC CENTER, 115 US HIGHWAY 17 NORTH,
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TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, July 6, 2021, • 10 am.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Mayor Hellyer called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Mayor Hellyer, Councilmembers Drake, Holder, Keating, and Pellegrino, and Mayor Pro Tempore Scoles were in attendance. Others present, Town Administrator Shanahan, Town Attorney Crosby, and Town Clerk Sheri Medina. Absent was Councilmember Dietrich.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS – Agenda Items**
 - A. **William Kinken**, 1312 N Dogwood. Mr. Kinken stated I hope the rumors I'm hearing are not true that you're going to buy a 40-year-old building or lease a 40-year-old building and stick a bunch of money in it. That's a rumor I've heard. I don't know if it's true. We've got to look at our financial position. We've gone through a lot of money for the pier, which I think is justified. I love what you've done so far. I guess we've got to do something for our buildings. But, putting a building across 17, it's just not a good idea because I come to these meetings a lot, and every time I come up here, I usually come in the golf cart. I can't get across 17. I seldom ever go across 17. Thank you.

Councilmember Keating made a motion to modify the agenda to put Civics Plus business item as item A and move Building Options' presentation to Item B. Councilmember Drake second. All voted in favor. **Motion Carried**

3. **BUSINESS**

A. **Civics Plus** – Mr. Shanahan presented a proposal for new website development and management available. Mr. Shanahan explained all the features that will come with the new website should Council choose to move forward.

Mr. Shanahan stated as you remember, you came up with five external and five internal goals. Goal #3 was to research an enhanced website. We think this is an asset that will help the Town. The Civic Plus website will provide a lot more information to our residents to know what's going on. There will be online forms to fill out and submit. No more printing then uploading. It will provide sign-up opportunities for our residents to receive whatever information they have available that is important to them. We want our residents to know what we are doing.

As part of the Civic Plus offer, the website has a Civic Engagement platform that includes (1) an Alert Center for emergency and vital information, (2) a blog for information on community topics, (3) a calendar, (4) resident request tracker to ensure follow and issue resolution. It will also allow residents to create a user profile, customize their dashboard for updated news, events, and information, and access the notification feature to receive text messages or emails on selected topics.

The website will have improved user-friendly navigation, including Frequently Asked Questions, graphic links, quick links for often requested information, and predictive search indexes. The website will allow each department to post and track activities, showcase community facilities and online reservations, job postings, and open bids. An essential feature is the "Automatic Alt Tag that allows ADA compliance. It's is adaptable to be accessed on all devices, it is printer-friendly, and it has a translation feature into about 100 languages.

Other website enhancements include online credit card processing for secure bill payment online. It will handle all of those different departments that collect money, which gives us a really good way of tracking the money coming in and where it's going.

Councilmember Keating stated we currently have documents online available. However, you still have to print it, fill it out, scan it back into your computer, and email it to the appropriate recipient; it's all interactive

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and online in this system. You access the desired form, fill it out, hit submit, and go right to the department. It is a genuine online process.

Councilmember Scoles asked how are we going to deal with the residents that do not have computers? They deserve the same courtesy. We've also got to consider the minority of our residents. They are still entitled to this information.

Mr. Shanahan stated residents could go to the library to access the computers. Also, we are looking into putting a computer in the lobby for people to use.

Mayor Hellyer stated that we used to send out the newsletter some time ago because some do not have computers. Can we look into sending them out again? Mr. Shanahan said he would look into it.

Councilmember Keating stated that those residents that don't have access to computers or emails would not be affected by the change to the website. However, they're getting their information today; they'll continue to get it even after we upgraded the website.

For implementation, Mr. Shanahan stated the website would take approximately 4 – 6 months to build, train, test, and launch. He also explained there are two financial options. First, we can pay the complete development fee and 1st year annual cost in the first year for a total of \$42,233. The second option is to break the development price up over 4 years, including the annual fee at \$19,093 each year. The fifth year would consist of only the annual maintenance fee of \$11,840. Beginning in the 6th year, the annual maintenance fee would increase 3% per year unless otherwise re-negotiated.

Councilmember Keating stated that we've got SurfsideBeach.org that is primarily town operations-oriented, events and information out of town Hall; we've also got VisiteSurfsideBeach.com that we are also managing and is focused on visitor information. However, this platform, should we choose, could replace both of those so that there is a one-stop-shop for all information regarding Surfside Beach, whether you want to look at visitor information, restaurants, hotels, advertisements, links with the town events, and marketing promotions. Still, it could all be in one place with just your quick links as to what you're interested in. We've got both.

Councilmember Keating also noted that we negotiated some better pricing from their original proposal and standard practice. They have annual contracts, and the annual maintenance fee goes up 5% every year. We've been able to negotiate with them to hold the annual fee steady for the first four years and only increase it 3% per year thereafter.

Councilmember Pellegrino stated this seems like a great platform to send that information on, but we did not budget for this in this year's budget, as far as I know. We would be making a \$76,000 commitment over the first four years. Then \$12,000 and after that. This is something that should be discussed during the budget process. I don't think we should be taking on any budget amendments right now.

Councilmember Keating stated that, as I mentioned, this project would be replacing the two websites that are already in the budget. The budget includes several thousands of dollars to maintain those sites and tens of thousands of dollars for people who manage those sites. All that will offset the price of the new platform.

Councilmember Scoles stated that my only comment is that there are additional costs that we're offsetting, which isn't a total add to the budget. It's an incremental increase, but certain costs are in the budget; there will be an offset to this total increase.

Councilmember Holder stated this system is used in 4000 Municipal towns across the country and other countries, and they are the expert in working with towns and cities. Very impressive cost. This is nothing compared to what I'm used to.

Councilmember Scoles stated that is very reasonable, and I think we owe it to our residents to come up with what cost we already have built-in the budget that will come off of this bottom line. We can show them that we are mindful of their tax dollars, especially with everything else we have going on in this Town, with that pier costing more and more than what we anticipated.

Mr. Shanahan agreed to provide the net cost of this project at the next regularly scheduled council meeting.

B. Building Options Presentation – Mr. Shanahan recapped all the information that has been compiled over the last few months to address the mold and structural integrity issues in the Town Hall, Council Chamber/Court, Police, Planning, Building, and Zoning, and the Civic Center.

Earlier this year, we noticed moldy odors, and a few employees complained of headaches. In addition, we started seeing black substances on the wall of the courthouse. In the Town Hall, the Clerk's office, Mayor's office, the bathrooms, the second floor, and the server room office showed elevated airborne mold spores. We also discovered where the town hall was connected to the council chambers, was done incorrectly, or has broken down over time. We have moisture and water leakage all around the connections that have not been addressed in a long time. We took a look at the courthouse and identified surface mold, elevated moisture readings, and high RH levels in the courthouse. In evaluating the severity of the mold, several significant structural issues were uncovered that raised safety concerns.

The Planning Building & Zoning portion of the building had elevated levels of airborne spores. The Civic Center also elevated airborne mold spore levels in all areas, but not as bad. The Police have minimal mold, and it was isolated to document storage and due to the air conditioning unit.

A real estate appraisal was done on all the buildings to determine the value of the asset. The appraiser concluded that the buildings were in such poor condition that they would not contribute to the price. The land alone is currently 1.66 acres and was appraised at \$415,000, not including the Police Department building. However, that value would include the Police Department Annex.

The first option would be to repair the structural damage, remediate or replace all areas with mold contamination. Due to the severity of the injury and the remaining unknowns, it is not fully understood if this option is feasible. The total price of what is known at this time for this option would exceed \$2.5M, excluding the expense for temporary facilities while the work is completed.

The second option is to demolish and rebuild Town Hall, PB&Z building, and the Court Chambers. With mold remediation and asbestos testing and removal, this alternative would cost approximately \$5M. This also does not include the expense for temporary facilities while the work is completed.

The third option would be to purchase the Caldwell Banker building on Highway 17. It is currently listed for \$1.2 million. We would anticipate minor remodeling of the interior over time. We also recommended that we purchase the surrounding vacant lots for additional parking and add a Council Chambers/Court building. This would cost ~\$800K.

4. **Executive Session** pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act §30-4-70(a)(2), discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed purchase of a property.

Councilmember Holder made a motion to enter into executive session in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act §30-4-70(a)(2) to discuss negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed purchase of a property. Councilmember Drake second. All voted in favor. **Motion Carried.**

Councilmember Keating made a motion to re-enter the public session of the special meeting Tuesday, July 6 at 11:25 am. Councilmember Holder second. All voted in favor. **Motion Carried.**

5. **Council may take action related to matters discussed in Executive Session**

Mayor Heller stated that no action was taken in an executive session. Previously we authorized the town administrator to negotiate in the Town's best interests a non-binding agreement to hold the purchase of the property in the Town's best interests. Today we had some discussion about it, and we asked those negotiations to continue. This topic will be on the agenda for this Tuesday. It is anticipated that the negotiations will be complete, and we will vote to implement the optimum solution for these issues. So that was, that is the result of the executive session.

6. **ADJOURNMENT.** Councilmember Holder made a motion to adjourn at 11:26 am. Councilmember Keating second. All voted in favor. **Motion Carried**

Surfside Beach Town Council

Robert Hellyer, Mayor

David L. Pellegrino

Bruce H. Dietrich, Town Council

Cindy Keating, Town Council

Michael Drake, Town Council

Debbie Scoles, Mayor Pro Tempore

Paul Holder, Town Council

Attest: _____
Sheri L Medina, Town Clerk

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