

MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 2, 2019
EMERGENCY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
10:00 A.M.

Town of Edisto Beach
Town Hall
2414 Murray Street
Edisto Beach, SC 29438

Present: Jane S. Darby, Mayor, Crawford Moore, Mayor Pro Tempore, Susan Hornsby, Jerome Kizer and Patti Smyer, Council Members; *Quorum of Council Present.*

Mayor Darby called the meeting to order and asked Council to consider the following while Administration updated Council: curfew and emergency order and authorizing funds for repair and recovery for pre-storm and post-storm.

Town Administrator Iris Hill welcomed those in attendance and updated them on the status of Hurricane Dorian. "The Governor has called a mandatory evacuation of coastal areas including Edisto Beach. That is a governor-mandated evacuation. Right now, we are working with the information we have, which is subject to change, because it is a fluid situation, no one knows what Mother Nature is going to do... I'm going to turn it over to the Chief (Police Chief George Brothers)... I have given Council a Proclamation State of Emergency, I would like for you to take action on that, which would include implementing a curfew."

Police Chief George Brothers: "We will have our check point set up at noon today at the Edistonian just as we have in the past. We'll be fairly liberal with that checkpoint today. We know that some of you still have work to get done to get ready so if someone's got a legitimate reason to come into town, we will allow you to come into town. Mainly we want to keep out the looky-loos, we don't need all the people who don't need to be here getting in the way of you getting your work done. That will continue into tomorrow (Tuesday, September 3, 2019), tomorrow afternoon at 6:00 we will lock it down. Six o'clock in the evening, we'll lock it down. So you need to have all your work done by 6:00. We are asking for a curfew, to begin tonight as a result of the emergency order, and that will be in effect, assuming Council passes it, that will be in effect from 8:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. every night until. Of course, we don't know how long that will be, we don't know what's going to happen with the storm." Chief Brother went on to explain that if a contractor has ID, or a property owner has proof of ownership, or, "something to indicate you have a reason to be here," officers will let you in past the check point. An audience member asked if family members would be let in to assist with storm preparation. Chief Brothers stated, "You'll probably have to come out and escort them in."

Administrator Hill encouraged everyone to sign up for CodeRed if they have not already, by going to the Town's website. "Because of the mandatory evacuation, Republic Services, who was going to pick up our garbage tomorrow, because of the holiday today...are not able to pick up our garbage. Big problem, because everybody wants to get rid of their waste. We had opened the convenience station and because people came in and dumped stuff on the ground, we are closing the convenience station because we cannot take the time to clean up a mess and prepare for the hurricane at the same time. Everyone will need to keep your garbage cans secured someplace under your homes or you can take it to a different convenience station tomorrow in Colleton County. There's one in Green Pond, there are several that will be open tomorrow.

Our containers are full. They can't be emptied until Republic comes, and they're not going to work during a mandatory evacuation. It is a problem, we know it's a problem, but that's the best we can do."

Administrator Hill mentioned that administration would like Council to take action to consider suspending permit fees on storm repairs and to consider shutting down the water and sewer systems on Wednesday, September 4 at 8:00 a.m. If the storm is further off the coast or makes a turn, services would not be suspended. Notifications will be sent via CodeRed concerning the shut off. Administrator Hill stated, "We are anticipating... six to twelve inches of rain at this point... We do have sandbags available at Town Hall. We have sand available across from Jungle Road Park. Please don't take sand off the beach."

Mayor Darby recapped the morning's storm update. The latest update is that Dorian should pass the South Carolina coast about 40 – 50 miles offshore. Edisto Beach will experience tropical force winds beginning Wednesday night through Thursday night. The winds extend out 90 miles from the center of the hurricane. A high storm surge will begin to build. Four to six feet of inundation of storm surge is expected. Anywhere from six to eight inches of rain is expected at this time, with more forecast for the immediate coastal areas. The final track of Hurricane Dorian is uncertain. Mayor Darby stressed preparation and safety.

Reentry was discussed next. Mayor Darby stated, "(reentry) will be based on conditions. We were unlucky with Matthew, it took time to get the spewing gas tanks, the port-o-lets, the electric wires, and everything off the roads and make sure you would not be coming into unsafe conditions. We were more fortunate with Irma, we were able to... allow people back that afternoon (of the following day). I want you to realize, it is not to keep you out. With Matthew, we could not have made the rapid recovery we did if we had had to deal with the population of the beach and all the big equipment and everything else.... We were able to move rapidly, get all of our resources in here, so that when we did recover, it was in a short amount of time and we were all back in business. Irma, we were able to work around that. Reentry all depends on the state of the conditions. Nobody wants to keep you out of your house. It's inconvenient I know, it's stressful. But the primary thing is that we're not going to allow you to come back in and step on a live wire, or run into a tree... We check to see that all the houses are fit for habitation.... Most important, we want the sand left out on the beach. Do not fill sandbags from the beach."

Administrator Hill stated, "Because we anticipate some flooding, I would suggest that you elevate items that are underneath your homes. Please secure items that are underneath your homes.... Unplug golf carts or move them, because golf carts that are left plugged in under your home can catch on fire. The same goes for moving vehicles. If you leave them and it's flooded, your vehicles of course will be flooded. Make sure that you have prescription medicines.... Have your insurance papers available. Fuel your vehicles." Administrator Hill introduced Kate Hall and Wendy Griffin who are spearheading the Volunteer Coordination effort.

Police Chief George Brothers said, "I know some of you in here are going to say, 'I'm not leaving, I'm staying.' That's your decision. However, you cannot stay with children. If you have children and you are staying here, then the children get turned over to DSS, so factor that into it. When the winds reach 45 miles per hour, EMS is going to pull out. Somewhere along the line, (fire) Chief Conley and I are going to get together and we're going to say, 'OK, we're done' and we will suspend all emergency services. If you call 911 after that point, nobody's coming to help. Just keep that in mind."

Mayor Darby said, "We're going to attempt to keep Town Hall staffed for any problems that may arise, or for informational purposes, up until the very last minute that we're allowed to. So there will be somebody here...so that we can answer questions, any need that you may have..."

Patrick Brown, Building Code Official reminded those in attendance to disconnect LP and other gas tanks. He asked Council to make it clear that permit fees would be waived for storm damage only. Tree removal permits are not required when there is a state of emergency. Administrator Hill suggested homeowners turn water off at the house so if the pipes burst or pull apart then water will not be free flowing from your house. Mayor Darby reminded those with ground-level refrigerators to unplug them.

Fire Chief Denney Conley reminded those in attendance that there had been several fires from golf carts that were left plugged in, were flooded and when the electricity was restored, caught fire.

An audience member asked if Facebook and the website would be updated with information, and whether or not the regular Town Hall number can be called to get information. Mayor Darby stated Town Hall would be staffed until the last minute possible. Administrator Hill explained that whatever is posted on Facebook automatically gets posted to the website. You do not have to log in to Facebook to read what is on the website. If you click on the information, you can read it on the website without logging in to Facebook.

An audience member asked if, on re-entry, would consideration be given to permanent residents. Mayor Darby stated that depended on the damage.

An audience member asked if the McKinley Washington Bridge would be closed for any period of time. Chief Brothers said, "Charleston County knows that that bridge is our only access. They are never going to come up and say the bridge is closed. It can be extremely dangerous, in high winds, to drive across that. But they are not going to say, 'You can't come in' because if there are high winds you can't fly a helicopter in to get you out." Mayor Darby explained, "The other thing is... boats, especially the ones at the Marina are extremely high profile. When that wind builds, as high as the bridges are...that thing is going to rock and roll and could easily turn over. The other thing is, they need to get them out now."

Chief Brothers explained the Enmarket manager, "We're going to do exactly what I just told you. Your answer to them (Enmarket corporate) should be, 'an evacuation is mandatory at noon today.' We're not going to prevent you from doing your job... there are still people here that need gas, or need Subway... but tomorrow afternoon at 6:00, people are not going to be able to get to work anymore. We are not going to let them in."

Jimmy King announced the Island Relief would be located at the old magistrate's building at 8070 Indigo Hill Road. Mr. King passed out an informational flyer.

Andrew Van Dort, manager of the Edisto BiLo spoke next. BiLo will remain open until 8:00 p.m. on Monday in support of residents. After a discussion, it was determined that island residents will be allowed on the beach at the checkpoint to get supplies from the BiLo. On Tuesday, the store will be open until 6:00 p.m. at the latest.

Mayor Darby asked Mr. King to let the Town know when businesses would be closed/reopened after the storm.

Councilman Kizer moved to approve the Proclamation of State of Emergency and Order, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Moore. This includes a curfew starting at 8:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. until further notice. The motion was passed unanimously. Councilwoman Smyer moved to approve the waiving of permit fees for storm damage, seconded by Councilwoman Hornsby and unanimously approved. A permit is still required, but fees will be waived.

Councilwoman Hornsby moved to approve authorizing the Town Administrator to spend up to one million dollars from prior year funds for immediate recovery and necessary expenses during Hurricane Dorian. Mayor Pro Tem Moore seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Kizer and unanimously approved.

The public/media was informed of the location, date and time of the meeting on Sunday, September 1, 2019.

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL



Deborah Hargis, Municipal Clerk
September 12, 2019