

MINUTES
August 28, 2015
EMERGENCY SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
8:30 A.M.

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

Present: Jane S. Darby, Mayor, Pete Anderson, Susan Hornsby, Mayor Pro Tempore and Patti Smyer, Council Members; *Quorum of Council Present.*

Mayor Darby called the meeting to order. An emergency special meeting was called to discuss Tropical Storm Erika. The latest National Weather Service briefing states that "Erika remains a poorly organized tropical storm. Early Friday morning, the official 5:00 a.m. National Hurricane Center Forecast and various computer models have shifted the track of TS Erika to the west. Since the storm is expected to cross the mountain terrain of Hispaniola and then to make landfall in south Florida, thereafter remaining overland, Erika is no longer forecast to become a hurricane. Due to the poorly organized nature of the system and shifts in model forecasts, forecast confidence remains low. If Erika remains on the latest forecast track, we could still experience locally heavy rains, gusty winds, hazardous marine conditions and shallow coastal flooding, and even a risk for tornadoes around the middle of next week. If a weaker system tracks further west, potential impacts will be greatly reduced across Southeastern Georgia and South Carolina. Forecast uncertainty remains high and additional forecast changes are likely." Mayor Darby went on to say that the Town has a policy that deals with emergency situations such as tropical storms and hurricanes. Administrator Hill told those in attendance that the Policy Group is the Mayor, the Town Administrator and Council members. They have certain responsibilities according to the Emergency Operations Plan. On Thursday, August 27, there was a concern that Erika would become a hurricane and come up the coast. The special emergency meeting was called to decide if the storm threatens Edisto Beach, does Council want to have the option to declare a local disaster area here ahead of the storm and/or evacuate prior to the Governor calling for an evacuation. The State Park has decided not to evacuate until the Governor issues an evacuation order. Administrator Hill stated identifying "special needs" residents is an issue. Administrator Hill said that the Town needs a process where the Mayor has the ability to declare a disaster, even though that ability is provided in the statutes. Councilwoman Hornsby moved to approve giving the Mayor the authority to issue a local declaration of disaster and/or evacuation. Councilwoman Smyer seconded the motion. Councilwoman Hornby asked Town Attorney Bert Duffie if permission was given to the Mayor, would it include other hurricanes that might occur this season, or would it apply to Erika only. Mr. Duffie said it would just be for the current storm, but Council could, at the beginning of each hurricane season, grant the Mayor such authority. Attorney Duffie stated that there were already statutes in place to authorize that, but it wouldn't be detrimental to approve the authority at the beginning of each hurricane season. Mayor Darby stated that because of the prediction on

Thursday, the Town was under a "precautionary" Opcon 4. All of the equipment has been checked and everything is ready to go. If anything should change rapidly, the Town will be able to seamlessly transition to Opcon 3. Opcon 3 goes into effect 36 hours before predicted landfall. Opcon 2 is 24 hours before a storm makes landfall and Opcon 1 is 12 hours prior to landfall. Councilman Anderson asked what would happen to the residents that choose not to evacuate. Mayor Darby said there was a form indicating next of kin that would be filled out by those who made that decision. Coordination among all rental agencies and the Town would be key in notifying the rental population of an evacuation, and door-to-door notification would be necessary. Mayor Darby suggested Facebook and the Town website as auxiliary methods of notification. Mayor Darby called for a vote on the motion made by Councilwoman Hornsby, giving the Mayor the authority to issue a local declaration of disaster and/or evacuation. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

Jim Bishop asked if Council could make a decision to evacuate prior to the Governor's mandate. Administrator Hill said that is possible. Mr. Bishop asked if it was his decision to stay on the beach during a hurricane, would he be allowed to do that. Mayor Darby said that he would be able to make that decision, but would be asked to stay in his residence and sign a form with next of kin information. No services would be guaranteed at that point (water, electricity, etc)

A member of the audience asked what the requirements were for getting back onto the beach after a hurricane. Mayor Darby told those in attendance they would need an identification of some sort showing their permanent address within Town limits. Admission is done in stages, with an assessment team being granted first access. Permanent residents are next, and the time allowed to assess their property may be limited. A picture id showing a permanent address in Edisto Beach is necessary for access.

Adjournment:

Pete Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Patti Smyer. The motion was unanimously approved.

The media/public was informed of the date, time and location of the meeting on Thursday, August 27, 2015.

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL



Deborah Hargis, Municipal Clerk
September 10, 2015