

MINUTES
TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL GOAL-SETTING RETREAT
JANUARY 28, 2025
10:00 a.m.

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

Present: Crawford Moore, Mayor; Jerome Kizer, Robert Renner, Jay Watts, Joey Bagwell, Council Members. *Quorum of Council Present*

Staff Present: Town Administrator Mark Aakhus, Assistant Town Administrator Dee Stalvey, Town Attorney Maryann Blake, Fire Chief Denney Conley, Police Chief Daniel Seyle, Building Code Administrator Patrick Brown, Utilities Director Patrick Zemp, Special Projects Coordinator Phyllis McElveen, Municipal Clerk Donna Iskra, Municipal Association of South Carolina Field Representatives Charlie Barrineau, and Desiree Fragoso (facilitators).

Others Present: Several residents of the Town of Edisto Beach were present at this meeting.

The following items were discussed during this meeting as possible goals/projects for the 2025-2026 budget year:

Interior Lagoon Study

- Received several recommendations from Davis & Floyd, including options for completing the project in phases.
- FEMA funds are available with a 75/25 split with the Town, and Mayor Moore is working on additional earmark funding through our lobbyist.
- Funds will be requested and earmarked with inflation and contingencies accounted for.
- Council agreed that it would be more prudent to work in phases resulting in less strain on the Town's budget.

Town-wide Option for Additional Drainage

- Working with Davis & Floyd in obtaining town-wide estimates on additional drainage studies throughout the Town.
- Specific areas of concern were noted, including Yacht Club Road, the Northern end of Palmetto Boulevard, Neptune Street, and Billow Street.
- Regular maintenance should continue in the Ocean Ridge lagoon section.
- Council recommended doing several studies simultaneously to reduce the cost.

Causeway Elevation

- Lowcountry Council of Governments has agreed to pay for SCDOT to conduct a feasibility study regarding elevating the causeway.
- Mayor Moore noted the project needs to be a priority for safety reasons.

- Mr. Renner noted a previous DNR report found it feasible to reconnect Scott Creek through/underneath the causeway with no issues.

Septic Systems Next Steps

- Mr. Renner gave a presentation with the results of his investigation into the environmental and health concerns of the impact of septic tanks. He provided data which showed no significant risks to health, recreation, or the economy. Water samples were taken from various locations town-wide, including Scott Creek at the Spanish Mount and the Mouth of Big Bay Creek. Readings were taken at varying dates and tide levels. Rainfall was attributed to higher bacteria levels seven of the nine times reported. The high readings were random and could not be attributed to any one conclusion.
- Mr. Renner made no recommendation to mandate property owners to have annual septic tank inspections but would recommend regular inspections by SCDES certified contractors
- Council agreed on the need to educate residents about septic system maintenance.

Implement AMI Systems

- Preparing to advertise for bids to be published during the first quarter of 2025.
- Mr. Zemp noted the benefits for both the homeowners and the Town. AMI's would offer a portal for tracking usage and identifying leaks. They would also provide more frequent billing and more accurate readings.
- Mayor Moore noted having the readers will pay dividends to the Town with staff freed up to perform other tasks.
- \$1,000,000 in funding for the project has been received through the SC Legislature and there is no matching component.
- In order to oversee this project, a committee has been established consisting of the Mayor and a Councilmember, the Water and Sewer Committee Chairman, Town Administrator, and Utilities Director.
- The approximate meter count is 2500, and the replacement process will take a few months.

Beach Nourishment Project

- Appraisals, surveys, and title work have been sent to the Army Corps of Engineers. They are midway through reviewing the title opinions.
- Next step will be to forward the easement agreements to the affected beachfront homeowners (appx. 150-160).
- Once easement agreements have been shared, a follow-up public meeting will be scheduled to update property owners and answer questions.
- Construction is scheduled for late 2025 – early 2026.

Burley L. Lyons Park Boardwalk

- The Town Administrator has received calls from nearby residents who are not in favor of having the Park's boardwalk, etc. in close proximity to their homes. These residents are concerned about crowds, trash, parking, etc.
- This project is part of the Town's Recreational Plan and is for residents and visitors. There are no additional recreational facilities/amenities planned for the park; just greenspace and a boardwalk.
- Mr. Aakhus will prepare responses to the adjacent property owners.

- Council consensus was to proceed with this project.

Miscellaneous Budget Items

- Will be discussed during the 2025-2026 budget process.

Recreational Fires

- Mr. Aakhus provided Council with the current Fire Ordinance.
- Mr. Kizer noted fire safety is becoming more of an issue due to climate and weather changes.
- Chief Conley stated permits are not issued for bonfires or fires of any kind on the beach. The Fire Department and Police Department work together on any reports of fire or smoke and contact is made with the person or persons to enforce the ordinance.
- Chief Conley noted new fire pits are required to be inspected. They must comply by having a spark arrestor, water source, and the area be free of any low-hanging limbs.
- Council agreed to review current ordinance and make changes based on recommendations from the Fire Chief, etc. Mr. Aakhus will prepare a revised draft ordinance for the Council's review.

2024 Progress Report

Mr. Aakhus presented the 2024 Progress Report to Council, and discussion was held by Council on the items listed:

Goal: Continue to secure easements for the USACE Edisto Beach Nourishment Project

- Surveys completed
- Appraisals completed
- Title research and opinions provided to USACE for review
- Easement language approved by USACE
- Pending USACE approval, easement preparation and distribution to begin

Goal: Provide DOT the recommendation from Town Council on the Jungle Road Improvement Plan

- This has been provided with appropriate follow-up
- Attended pre-construction meeting on December 16, 2024
- Requested construction begin early May (between spring break and summer)

Additional Comments:

- *Recommendation was made last year by Council to remove rumble strips and request DOT to restore the width of the bike path to the original width from Whaley St. to Dawhoo St.*
- *Mr. Aakhus met with DOT to discuss the phases of the project.*
- *Will be requesting quote from Banks Construction for McConkey's Square to Palmetto.*

Goal: Work diligently with EOC/Town Hall project team to ensure the project stays on budget and on schedule

- Hired project management team
- Project is currently on budget and on schedule

- Pre-application for generator grant approved; full application due April 30, 2025

Additional Comments:

- *Cumming Group will provide an update on the EOC/Town Hall project at the February 2025 Work Session*

Goal: Conduct meeting to determine the future of KEB and TIDE

- Conducted meeting to determine the future of KEB and TIDE.
- KEB is back on track with a full board and holding meetings regularly with TIDE Committee representatives attending the meetings.

Goal: Establish the feasibility of a mandatory septic tank inspection program

- Advertised and participated in public meetings regarding EIOLT's septic tank program
- Periodically published information via Monthly Highlights and the Town's website
- Reviewed Councilman Renner's research efforts and presentation.

Goal: Secure additional funding for meter reader upgrade.

- Completed: \$1,000,000 in funding received.
- Schedule: Bid to be published first quarter of 2025
- Selection committee will include the Mayor and one Councilmember, Water and Sewer Committee Chairman, Town Administrator, and Utilities Director

Goal: For the next budget cycle, obtain quotes on gravel/grading options for the Civic Center parking lot

- Drainage ditches were re-graded which has helped
- Parking lot to be routinely graveled/graded

Additional Comments:

- *Mr. Aakhus noted the grading and gravel was underway. Five (5) trucks of gravel have been delivered and more is expected.*
- *Drainage clean-up was completed in-house. Lyons Contracting is maintaining.*

Goal: Establish a permanent Golf Cart Safety Program

- Completed
- Actions included Town Council passing a proclamation designating June as Golf Cart Safety and Education Month
- EBPD increased golf cart related interactions including soliciting gift cards and other rewards from area businesses to distribute to golf cart operators who demonstrated safe operating procedures

Additional Comments:

- *Mayor Moore complimented the Chief on enforcing golf cart safety laws with common sense and noted noticeable improvements due to the department's efforts.*

Goal: Finalize safety improvements at Jungle Road Park

- Post and rope fence installed
- SCDOT installed crosswalk signs

Goal: Leverage CTC funds for additional pedestrian/paving needs

- Completed
- Presented request to Colleton County Transportation Committee and received \$175,000 to serve as matching funds for SCDOT-funding bike path/sidewalk repaving and improvement

Goal: Conduct a feasibility study for possible dog park

- Not completed

EBPOA-Beverly Sandifer present to represent the EBPOA

- The EBPOA would like Council to consider having beach accesses 36 and 37 designated as wildlife sanctuaries and add QR codes to beach accesses directing viewers to a website with information on our beach wildlife. Mayor Moore noted DNR designates which areas are wildlife sanctuaries but suggested working together with Ken Tingman whose experience and vision would be invaluable in recommending educational programs.
- The EBPOA recommended more vigorous enforcement of the existing tree ordinance. Mr. Brown noted most lots are small, so trees have to be removed for placement of the home and most homeowners mitigate with replacement trees. Mr. Brown stated the current ordinances could be reviewed but the Town follows them with very few exceptions. Historically, fining offenders has not been effective. The Town has no authority over Dominion's rights-of-way.
- The EBPOA is recommending underground power lines where feasible. Mr. Aakhus noted this was looked at a few years back and due to the cost, it was not an option, Ms. Fragoso noted in her experience with underground power lines they are extremely expensive. Mayor Moore noted this would not be feasible for us at this time.
- The EBPOA raised safety concerns over parking on Palmetto Boulevard. Mr. Aakhus discussed what SCDOT stated would be required to place crosswalks across Palmetto Boulevard. SCDOT will not place a crosswalk across a four-lane highway without a median/bump out, etc.. Chief Seyle noted no incidents have been reported.
- The EBPOA is suggesting the Town be proactive prior to Dominion tree cutting to mitigate problems.

RECAP

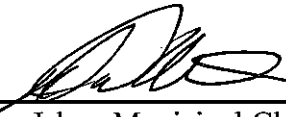
- Charlie Barrineau closed this goal-setting meeting with a recap of the goals discussed:

Goals for 2025-2026

- Interior Lagoon Study: Using the recommendations from Davis & Floyd, plan to work in phases; continue to secure funding through FEMA and through state earmarked funds.
- Town-wide Option for Additional Drainage: Working with Davis & Floyd, obtain an estimate for a beach-wide drainage study.

- Causeway Elevation: Continue to pursue a feasibility study and recommendations to address causeway flooding.
- Septic Systems: Recommend to homeowners the importance of regular inspections by SCDES certified contractors; continue to educate residents on proper maintenance.
- Implement Automatic Reading Intelligence (AMI) System: Advertise bids in first quarter of 2025; established committee will oversee this project.
- Beach Nourishment Project: Continue to work toward easement agreements with beachfront homeowners as soon as possible; schedule follow-up meeting with beachfront homeowners once easement agreements have been shared.
- Burley L. Lyons Park Boardwalk: Continue with project.
- Recreational Fires: Review current ordinance and make revisions based on recommendations from the Fire Chief and others; present revised ordinance to Council for review.

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL



Donna Iskra, Municipal Clerk
February 13, 2025