

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

May 12, 2020

A meeting of the Committee on Traffic and Transportation was held this date beginning at 2:00 p.m. over Zoom Conference Call.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

PRESENT

Councilmember Seekings, Chair; Councilmember Brady, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Delcioppo, and Mayor Tecklenburg (arrived at 2:08 p.m.) **Present:** Robbie Somerville, Keith Benjamin, Gary Cooper, Janie Borden, Jennifer Cook, and Bethany Whitaker, Council Secretary

The meeting was opened with an invocation provided by Councilmember Brady.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On the motion of Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilwoman Jackson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2020 meeting.

Clements Ferry Road Phase II Maintenance Agreement for Approval

Mr. Benjamin said that Berkeley County was working on Phase II of the Clements Ferry Road widening project. They were widening from two lanes to four lanes. It was a project that went from Jack Primus to SC 41. Usually with these projects, the City had their preferences about multi-use space, landscaping, and irrigation. So, usually they would send it to the Parks Department and they coordinated. Then, they accepted a maintenance agreement along with the project for those specific items. The maintenance agreement was very specific about what those items were. They were asking for approval on that coordination.

On a motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilmember Brady, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the above Maintenance Agreement.

Folly/Albemarle Maintenance Agreement for Approval

Mr. Benjamin said that at the last meeting, they had a Transportation Sales Tax project from the County. This was an agreement in regards to the maintenance of landscaping and irrigation. That intersection was a glaring missing piece of connectivity. One of the lessons learned working with New York City and Vancouver for the Ashley River Crossing was that if people couldn't get safely on or off the bridge, there was reason to build it. This would be an important aspect to connectivity. They were asking for approval. They did have County staff on if there were specific questions.

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilwoman Delcioppo, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the above Maintenance Agreement.

Update on Towing Contract

Mr. Cooper said that they wanted to update them on where they stood with the new towing contract. They issued a bid in February and received proposals back in the middle of March. They received four proposals. They went out towards the end of April and inspected the four sites. Two of the vendors were deemed non-responsive. That left Turkey's Towing and Jennings Towing. The new contracts were such that Turkey's would have the contract for Zones two and four which was James Island, Johns Island and Daniel Island and Jennings

would have the contract for downtown and West Ashley. It was a one year contract with four options. It was put in place last Friday. They weren't asking for any action. They just wanted to give an update. If there were any questions, he could answer them.

Chairman Seekings asked if it had been signed and put in place. Mr. Cooper said it had been. The previous contract ended on May 7th. With the Covid situation, the inspections took a bit to get squared away. Councilwoman Jackson asked if there was another contract. Mr. Cooper said there were two contracts. Turkey's Towing had a contract for the island and Jennings had a contract for downtown and West Ashley. They both went into effect. Chairman Seekings said he would assume the towing was slow at this point. Mr. Cooper said he didn't think they were overwhelmed. They started towing their own zones this past weekend.

Director's Update

Mr. Benjamin stated that they had added to their capacity and he was happy to say that their entire PEO dispatch team had been hired. They were finalizing the hiring of a new assistant signals manager, under Troy Mitchell, who was an internal hire, and then also the assistant manager under Michael Mathis. He was excited to get those positions. Knowing the tasks they gave him, in terms of the organization of the department, they really wanted to have teams in each division. They were excited about that being the case now within each division, that they would have that tandem of teams working together and making those divisions what they were supposed to be. Once they got them fully on board, he would love to bring them to the next meeting for them to meet.

Mr. Benjamin continued and said they were in hurricane preparedness mode. One of their obligations for the signal maintenance agreement was to do yearly inspections of all 200+ signalized intersections. That process had been completed. One of the other things they looked into that he wanted to give a heads up, because of occurrences last year, was they were able to begin identifying contractors for temporary signal systems. Last year, they had a couple of intersections that were knocked out of power or knocked down. Some were major intersections. So, they wanted to be prepared ahead of time for that. So, they were looking at rental equipment in that regard. Hopefully, that was something they wouldn't have to use, but just in case, they wanted to be ready to go. He also wanted to give quick updates about SCDOT coordination efforts. They had now done 20 intersections with SCDOT throughout the City for enhanced pedestrian safety. They were glad about that partnership and wanting to enhance that. SCDOT would be with them at the next meeting, hopefully, for two topics. The first would be to give an update on the first two of the four road safety audits that were conducted by SCDOT and the second would be to talk about another partnership dealing with the improvements on Folly and Formosa. Those intersections had been hot topics for those that lived near them. It came up on the list for a complete signal rebuild and so SCDOT was fronting the bill, but the City staff would be building it out.

Councilwoman Jackson said she had been reading emails recently that she considered very thoughtful and relevant. She knew they had been talking about how to encourage more pedestrian and cycle use downtown and experimenting with Hampton Park. The Public Works Committee had heard the Mayor propose to change the schedule again. In addition, she felt there was a lot of energy from citizens who had been primary users or witnesses to the uses that could be more thoughtfully done. They could may be create some sort of study task group to look at the uses of their streets. They were hearing a lot of

interest from their citizens. Chairman Seekings asked for a quick update on Hampton Park and then they could talk further about the other issues raised.

Mr. Benjamin said that at Recreation, Parks and Recreation gave a suggestion of new closure times for Hampton Park to be reviewed by Council, so moving away from the 10 a.m.-8 p.m. to keeping the regular weekend times as they were, but changing the weekday times for 4-8 p.m. They had been placing counters in Hampton Park to get some baseline data to see how many people were using it. It was being used in a significant way. He had also been getting the emails. It was something that was more than feasible, but would have to be prioritized by a number of departments. None of the options were impossible, but it would take coordination. It had been introduced by a number of cities around the country. Some of the pieces in the ordinance they had to take up that night regarding sidewalking came from some of the best practices from Tampa, who recently introduced a 14-day block time of street closures. They had to take into consideration what would work for Charleston and that they weren't fully out of Covid, but also the fact that there was an opportunity to have serious discussion about what transportation and safety looked like.

Chairman Seekings asked where they were with Hampton Park. Mr. Benjamin said that the new times were supposed to be reported out from the Recreation Committee. He wasn't sure if it was something to get voted on or not. He couldn't speak for that committee. Councilmember Brady said he would offer a suggestion. Since the Bike and Ped Advisory Committee already had representation both from this Committee and Charleston Moves, this could be something they refer to them, to come up with a list of potential improvements, suggestions, and areas of the City. Then, they could send a recommendation back to the T&T Committee for them to consider and send to Council. Councilwoman Jackson said that would be the perfect group. Mayor Tecklenburg said that he would just share the specifics about the Hampton Park hours. It was pretty easy. It was four hours a day, 4-8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-12 p.m. on Saturday and 1 p.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday. The normal schedule used to be eight hours a week, and this would be 28 hours per week. It was more than normal, but less than what they were doing up to a week or two ago. They did run into difficulties with staffing and access to the parking lot.

Chairman Seekings said he didn't remember how that came to pass in the last couple of months. Mayor Tecklenburg said it had just gotten implemented by him. Councilwoman Jackson asked if they should have a motion or just an agreement to send it to the Bike/Ped Committee. Councilmember Brady said he thought giving it a formal motion would help enable the group, as well as they could put a time on it. Chairman Seekings said he knew there was a Bike/Ped meeting coming up. Mr. Benjamin said technically. They skipped the March one because of Covid. By ordinance, they were supposed to meet every other month. So, they would have to call a special meeting to meet in May or whenever necessary. Chairman Seekings said he didn't think they would have a problem with getting together in short order.

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilmember Brady, the Committee voted unanimously to send a directive from the Traffic and Transportation Committee to take a look at best practices for street closures/adjustments, meet in May, and report back before the middle of July.

Chairman Seekings said they did have fully populated Bike/Ped Committee again. Councilmember Brady said he wanted to give a shout out to Mr. Benjamin and the responsiveness of his department. Councilwoman Jackson asked where the County was with the 2020 list of resurfacing. Mr. Benjamin said that he could find out when they would start. They normally put a letter out and let the neighborhoods know. He could resend the list of the roads on that list. Covid had changed a few things, but he could forward the contacts they used at the County to get updates. Councilwoman Delcioppo said that the Advisory Committee should keep in mind that some folks could only get downtown by car. They should be sensitive to that and also to people that didn't have the ability to bike or walk. Chairman Seekings said that the DOT had been working on Halsey Street for about a year. It was horrible, and he asked if they could get them to finish that.

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Bethany Whitaker
Council Secretary