

September 12, 2011

A Special Meeting of Sullivan's Island Town Council was held on the above date at the Church of the Holy Cross, 2520 Middle Street, Sullivan's Island, S.C.

Present were: Carl J. Smith, Mayor  
Mike Perkis, Mayor Pro Tem  
Hartley Cooper, Councilwoman  
Jerry Kaynard, Councilman  
Madeleine McGee, Councilwoman  
Patrick O'Neil, Councilman  
Mary Jane Watson, Councilwoman

The Great Room at the church was full to capacity.

The Very Reverend John Burwell welcomed everyone, and said the Church of the Holy Cross always welcomed the Town, and it was a true honor to be part of Sullivan's Island. He then followed with the invocation.

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm, and stated the press and public had been duly notified in accordance with the law. Mayor Smith stated he wanted to thank Holy Cross parishioners and staff, Reverend Burwell and Hal Rose, facilities manager, Andy Benke, Ellen Miller, Kat Kenyon, and Mary Coste, for helping with this meeting tonight.

Mayor Smith stated the lease on the agenda was a contractual agreement between the Town of Sullivan's Island and Charleston County School District, and therefore the speakers from Sullivan's Island will be acknowledged. Residents from the Isle of Palms and Mt. Pleasant are guests, and are welcome to listen. He added that speakers cannot speak longer than three minutes; and to be sure not to repeat what may have already been said. He asked Council members to refrain from getting into discussions with speakers; every Council member will have an opportunity to speak after the end of public comment. Administrator Andy Benke had the sign-in list to call speakers to the podium.

Motion was made by Councilman Perkis, seconded by Councilwoman Watson, to amend the agenda to move the discussion by the members of Council to after (4) Public Comment, and to add that the Committees of Council meeting be at the Special Meeting, carried unanimously.

Councilman Kaynard suggested that anyone who signed-in to speak be able to do so, including Isle of Palms and Mt. Pleasant residents. This suggestion was approved.

Mr. Benke called the following speakers to the podium:

Paul Kohlheim, 403 Station 20

We moved here because of the nature of the community, and the school is a vital part of a healthy community. I have read the various viewpoints of the school, and am perplexed why it is taking so long moving forward with a decision. I do not see the traffic associated with 100 more students being a problem.

Robbie Kennemur, 1738 I'on Avenue

I moved to the island in 1999, and have two children in the school. We have a tremendous opportunity with the school. We live in one of the most expensive zip codes, and for the largest building on the island to be a public school is great. We have smart people in leadership, but this leadership has been less than desirable to get this done. I say let's get this done.

Wayne Guckenburger, 2105 Pettigrew

I have a question regarding the lease about something called the inconvenience factor. I think the building permit for a \$25 million school would be about \$162,000 and I want to make sure we are charging for a building permit as well as the inconvenience factor. My second question is in the process moving forward, would the Town be responsible for paying for things that were not anticipated, or is there any recourse to charge that back to the parties involved.

Ed Allen, 956 Osceola

I have been on Sullivan's Island for eleven years, and like others, feel like we moved to paradise. My concern is according to the scale of the diagram, it is completely disproportionate to all the other scales of all the other properties. From this point on we are working with the notion that we now have the opportunity to at least have considered a school more of the scale and size that we had before. We need to continue to preserve this extremely special place.

Red Wood, 1454 Thompson Avenue

I am a newcomer to the island, I've only been here 63 years. The article in the paper by Mayor Smith was a well-written article. We need the school, but we need a smaller school. Let's keep this island; let's don't lose the character. The School Board can go back to the drawing board, and have Council to support the Mayor; and let's get this small school and keep this island unique.

Susan Middaugh, 2420 Raven

Our two daughters went to Sullivan's Island Elementary School and got an outstanding education. I've been surprised a minority of the children here actually go to the school. We have plenty of children on the island to populate that school. I think with this school we will have a state of the art facility to match our state of the art program and who's to say those extra children won't come to Sullivan's Island once we have the school. I also think with the added setbacks for the new school, and with good design, with input from us all, after it's built we're going to wonder what the fuss was all about.

Larry Middaugh, 2420 Raven

You just heard about the excellent education that our daughters received. I'm not opposed to a small school; on the other hand, smaller school or no school is ridiculous to me. I'd like to thank Council members for the work they put into this the past couple of years, and also Loren Ziff who has really outlined specifics of what's been going on in this process. I am very much in favor of a school. I don't think that 100 additional students is going to make a lot of difference and it would probably help getting a little more diversity in our school.

Fleming Harris, 2901 I'on Avenue

I worked at Sullivan's Island School for 29 years; as principal for 24 years. So obviously I do want the school to come back. It's in a unique community, small town atmosphere, and the school is unique. It's one of two schools in the nation on oceanfront property. One of the major factors of this school's success is parental and community involvement. The school was 35,000 square feet. It was full, and there were trailers behind the school. The building going to 77,000 square feet may be a little bit too much. I hope Charleston County School District will work with the Town of Sullivan's Island to maybe do a little compromising.

Mary Meehan, 411 Station 13

Most people here have already said my thoughts, but I just want to say I am definitely in favor of a new school. But being a retired teacher after 25 years, I just want to say that bigger is not always better. It's a loving environment and we don't want to create more of an institutional environment. It's really hard to keep that small, loving, community feeling as it gets bigger. But, I am definitely for a school whatever is decided. We just need to do the best we can to make the right decision.

Wayne Stelljes, 3014 I'on Avenue

A number of people have said what I wanted to say, but a couple of things I've said at previous Council meetings concern economies of scale. Building a smaller school is more expensive to maintain per student than a larger school. My question has been, if the school burnt down today and it had to be rebuilt for the same student group, how much larger would it have to be? I have asked them to come back with a number. We have been told the square footage of the building is required to be larger per student today, as well as the common areas do not change based on the number of students in general – the library, the auditorium, and the cafeteria.

Ron Coish, 2808 I'on Avenue

I think Red Wood stole my speech, thank you Red. Anyway, the school it too big and I want Council to delve into the matter a little more, and maybe come up with a compromise. I definitely want the school, but it's way too big.

Sherry Coish, 2808 I'on Avenue

I have lived here since 1978, and my children went to Sullivan's Island. I have to say my concern is as a taxpayer of Charleston County, and equitable use of my taxpayer dollars. I think a smaller school would be wonderful. But at the same time, the amount of money that is going to be spent on this school, and we do not know the impact of the water and sewer, as well as the money will be spent for such a structure that is located in the direct path of a hurricane which we all know will probably happen again as opposed to an earthquake. Also, not having children in school right now, all this has been talked about but I don't feel the other residents of Sullivan's Island were really included in this. I'm asking Town Council to take another look, and to let us know, and to be more transparent with this information.

Stephanie Smith, 1908 Thee Street

I know you are upset with me about the drawings that I did, but I feel the residents have been kept in the dark through this whole thing. We kept asking what we're getting; and nobody would show us what we were getting. So, I took my magic markers and drew what I think we're getting. I want someone to do a scale model and let us see. I know that Mt. Pleasant Town Council is wondering about those huge power poles because they said they didn't know they were going to be that big. Well, I'm afraid the school's got the same problem. We do not know how big it's going to be.

Summer Coish, 2808 I'on Avenue

I am a graduate of Sullivan's Island Elementary. Yes, I do support a school, but the current proposal seems to misrepresent the island character. Unfortunately, the last few years we have seen the island character deteriorate with some of the buildings in the commercial district that are oversized, and we don't want to see that again on our front beach property. There are many alternatives, and there is an excellent video by Vince Graham proposing alternatives based on his experience in I'on. Why can't we have those discussions before a final decision is made? Also, as my mother said earlier, are the taxpayer dollars being used appropriately? Could we use these resources more equitably and better if we shared them with some of the other school districts?

Hannah Dodson, 1462 Thompson Avenue

I want to try to clarify the issue of the small school. If we could all keep it exactly what we wanted, we would have a lovely little school house that wasn't bigger than necessary. The fact of the matter is Charleston County School District is not going to build us a small school. Charleston County has adopted and currently operates under a stated policy that new schools will not be built unless they reach a capacity of 500 students. They are too expensive to operate and are not economically feasible if smaller. So what is left? We are left with a choice of having a big school or no school, and we have to weigh those issues. The school brings young, permanent families to the island, gives us cohesiveness as a community, and a sense of connection. We are afraid of a new big building. Are we going to do the right thing and build a school and be a community that is for education, or are we going to try to preserve our perfect little character on this island?

Barbara Spell, 1702 Atlantic Avenue

Stephanie Smith mentioned the power poles on Coleman Boulevard, and I just happen to have an article from the paper that said some Mt. Pleasant Town Council members said the rendering of the power poles did not truly give a sense of the size of the towers. I think it is difficult to tell from a drawing what something is going to look like. I hate to contradict Hannah Dodson, but I was at the School Board meeting on August 22, and it is on tape and in their minutes that the parameters that are in the lease for this school were established by a previous Board, and that those parameters could be revisited. The video is on Channel 60. There are alternatives to what is being proposed on Sullivan's Island, for example, East Cooper Montessori was recently completed and is a public charter school serving grades 1-8. It fits in perfectly into a neighborhood. We need a school that is less costly to taxpayers, less stressful on the environment, and less obtrusive on our historic residential neighborhood.

Karen Coste, 322 Station 19

Some of you are aware there is a petition going around the island in support of a small school. I also would like to let you know that we have gone to hundreds of homes and 98% of the people's homes that we went to have signed the petition, so that is significant. I want to thank those people for standing up and doing that. The petition reads that we request that no further action be taken by Sullivan's Island Town Council on the approval of the proposed lease for Sullivan's Island Elementary School. It further says that they support the rebuilding of the new school, but one that would be a more appropriate size and scope for the historic residential community, and all Sullivan's Island residents deserve to be heard on this issue with full transparency. They further ask that Town Council stop any further action until the proposed school has been evaluated for water, sewage, and traffic; and that the public be fully informed of the results. They also ask that any proposed school comply with established design guidelines for neighborhood compatibility as it is stated in the Town of Sullivan's Island public ordinances, Article 12, Design Review Board, Section 21-111. And lastly, that all Island residents have been provided an opportunity for input at a public forum.

Kathleen Post, 1907 I'on Avenue

I would like to say Sullivan's Island Town Council was elected by residents of Sullivan's Island, and it feels that we are facing a closed system here. We all want a school, but we want one that fits. It feels that the decision has been made and we're not going to change it, and it doesn't seem fair. We would like to be considered just as important as anyone else, and that's all we're asking. I think we can have a smaller school. I was at that School Board meeting and they were very interested, and wanted to know what the whole community really wants.

Dave Peterseim, 1707 Atlantic

We have had three children go to this school. It is a wonderful part of our community. We support building the school, the fact that it is a partial magnet

school, and sharing with the community. I hope we can find a way to build this school as quickly as possible. If we drag this out with too much discussion we'll end up with nothing. I hope Town Council does what they think is best. I believe they have been trying their best.

Fred Wszolek, 3014 I'on Avenue

I'll just make two brief points. There's an exceptionally good reason to build a smaller school than the school district's policy. This is an expensive place to build. The cost per square foot on an island with hurricane and earthquake threats is a lot more expensive than building somewhere else. Secondly, the partial magnet school that we're doing seems like an excuse to fill empty seats. The one thing that Sullivan's Island Elementary School does that almost every school in the state does is to teach kids to read, write, and do arithmetic. This idea that we're going to turn elementary school kids into budding marine biologists just seems pretty far-fetched to me.

Louis Yuhaz, 3014 I'on Avenue

I've worked in the school district for ten years, and I haven't taken pay for the work I've done. Other schools do not have the parental support that we have here. I've seen cinder block buildings that still exist with CCSD. I think personally we should be ashamed that we would take money away from these other schools. I think that the same island that fought hard to keep a swing bridge now suggests that we bring hundreds of kids on buses over that swing bridge is ridiculous. I am all for a school. Personally, if it were left to me, we would build that school where the tennis courts are, and we would put a park where the school currently is and sell some of the beachfront land so we could resurface the other tennis courts. The school should be on Middle Street so that buses could drop kids right there, turn around and leave; versus going back into the community. I do think that we need an opportunity to be heard, and I think that we pay enough taxes to be heard.

Doris Lancaster, 1302 Thompson Avenue

I am for a school. I was born and raised here, and love this island. Everybody says we've come to paradise, but everyone keeps changing paradise. We don't need to be bringing children from Mt. Pleasant and Isle of Palms to build a bigger school. If we have a small school and we have room for other children, I think that's wonderful. I think we should do a Sullivan's Island school and then maybe a few others if we can put them in there.

John Selby, 2602 Atlantic Avenue

I've been a resident of Sullivan's Island for over 36 years and when I came here I was very amazed that you would have a public school on a barrier island. I do not think you should worry so much about the size and the looks because this is a very unique opportunity. You're living on an island that has had a major battle of the Revolutionary War, Fort Moultrie was built here, along with other historical background such as the Hunley, author Edgar Allen Poe, and the last lighthouse to

be built by the federal government. You should worry less about the size of the school, and make sure that you get the school back.

Rick Reed, 1851 Flag Street

We are so close we are unbelievable. There is just a thin line between what we are all trying to accomplish and what can be done. The one thing that I want to pass to the Council, however, and I think the School Board is represented here tonight; we should have representation from our Council at their meeting tomorrow night. But I sympathize with the parents, but if we drag this out we may lose an opportunity. If we can get something decisive from Council tonight and assure the School Board that we likewise want to do the due diligence that they've done, then I think this process can go on. Sign the Second Reading tonight and still be able to accomplish the time line that would let us get the best school for our kids. Or not sign, but beg and plead with your goodwill that we be allowed to have time to do the due diligence to look at the various surveys needed for this to get all the information we can, and move this process along.

Eddie Fava, 2424 Myrtle Avenue

This is not just an island issue, or families with children who attend or will attend the school, or not just for those next door to the building or blocks and blocks away. This project will affect us all. I am very much a strong support of the island school, as it is critical to the valuable sense of community. It must suit our island scale, context, environment and neighborhoods. However, the site has no zoning or Design Review guidelines attached to it. There has been no legitimate open public forum or formal review process and no mechanism within the lease to provide for this process. There must be a legitimate public forum. I attended the recent School Board meeting and voiced my support for the new facility. They were very much open to a smaller student body and think we should pursue that option.

Roy Williams, 2513 I'on Avenue

I was actually in grammar school here in the early 1940's. We have a very strong sense of community and I think that Sullivan's Island School is a unique treasure. We are a poor county and there are a lot of very poor school children in Charleston. I think perhaps to put up such a grandiose structure here seems somewhat self-serving and selfish. Every time I pass the office building on Middle Street, I think it is so out of scale. If most of the children come from elsewhere is it really a community school? I am a little concerned about unintended consequences. But I do hope that we can come together and do what is best for Sullivan's Island so that in years to come we can say we made the right decision.

Skip Scarpa, 2102 Atlantic Avenue

I am in favor of a new school. With all due respect to Mr. Red Wood, I'm the newcomer on the island, I've only lived here for 41 years. I have four children that have attended the school. Where my family lives, we will be severely impacted. It's been very peaceful where I live for the past couple of years. We created a petition and have spent the last two days going around the island, and over 95% of the

people we've asked to sign this petition agree essentially with what the Mayor has said. So what's going to happen is we're going to end up with about 95% of the residents of Sullivan's Island in disagreement with our Town Council if they proceed with building what they propose to build. The school district has said that if we come back with a better plan they are happy to listen to it. We can have a great school, and we can compromise on the design and I hope that our Council will do just that.

Carl Hubbard, 2531 Myrtle Avenue

I have been here 14 years and the last 12 years I've had kids at Sullivan's Island Elementary. I think for three years we've been talking about rebuilding. I've attended Council meetings where proclamations have been signed, and Council has known what was going on with the school. No one has been blindsided; they've been very transparent. I don't think that the school is going to be out of scale. I think they're going to be things in place to watch out for that. The students may not be biochemists or biology majors, but as a partial magnet school they are learning a lot, and I think partial magnet is a good thing for the school, and welcome it. The teachers make the school.

Vince Graham, 1401 Middle Street

First, I think everybody in here supports having a school on the island. Everyone understands the economy of scale, but that's the same argument that's used for Walmart. A big huge box for economy of scale, and I don't think that mentality belongs on Sullivan's Island. I think it would be great if you had a small school on Sullivan's Island and a small school on Isle of Palms so the kids can walk or ride their bike to school. Finally, I've heard the number that the school is going to cost \$28 million. I think you also need to take into account the value of the land, which is at least \$20 or \$25 million, so we're looking at something approaching a \$60 million facility. We're in tough times right now, and I feel like a giant school like that is a fundamental misallocation of resources and we need to use taxpayer resources more wisely.

Mae Peterseim, 1707 Atlantic Avenue

I was at a meeting about a year ago, and I remember the architect presenting a plan and the specific question was, what would happen if the student body was 350. And the answer was it would not be much smaller because of new codes, and the size of the common areas wouldn't change. So I'm afraid even if we make it a smaller school, it's not going to be that much smaller, and we need to go with the plan for 500, because that's really our only option. There is talk about how much money we are spending. We are using Charleston County school money to enrich a school and we're bringing other children in to a great school and sharing with the community.



Meg Howle, 2523 Goldbug Ave.

I've been in public education 40 years. I worked with the School Board for 15 years. I simply want to say be careful. Be very careful to try to change something that is already in the works, and the funding is in place. It's very difficult to get that funding. And if you open the door, I don't know what may happen. Just know that is something to consider. I love the school; my son went there. Everything about it is perfect. Just be very cautious as you proceed to make a change on something that is funded and approved.

Kevin Klemm, 2514 Myrtle Avenue

I am a newer resident to the island, and both of our children go to Sullivan's Island Elementary. I think it's easy to put an elevation up and say my goodness, look at the scale of that. It's nothing like it was before. It is not that you can't replicate what you had there before but many things have changed. The codes have changed, requirements have changed for buildings, egress, ingress, acoustics, glass, wind ratings, perimeter footings, interior footings, fire safety. All those things change the design of a building. You can do things to mask the perimeter of the elevation of the structure, but what you can't do is change the efficiencies. It is important to build a school that has the efficiencies; it has the public safety and fire safety for your children.

Kristen Smith, 24 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Isle of Palms

I am the Sullivan's Island Elementary School PTA President. When you talk about the difference between 400 and 500 students, 4 more classes, plus or minus another 15,000 square feet, which over the scope of this project is minimal. Twice a day, and a few more cars on the island that regularly sees 7,000 is my understanding; in the scope of the entire project seem negligible. Hundreds of students are not being bused from around Sullivan's Island to this school. Currently approximately 50 students are open for magnet students, the rest are residents of Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms. On September 22, the residents of Sullivan's Island have an opportunity to speak with the School Board, with the designer of the school, and give input and voice concerns. If the Second Reading is delayed, it will delay and possibly prevent the return of this school to Sullivan's Island, so please I ask you to take the steps to protect and preserve this marvelous school.

Ryan Buchanan, 23 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue

I have raised three boys that have gone through Sullivan's Island Elementary. They were the last class to graduate from this school. They are now at Laing, a magnet school having a phenomenal experience there – scuba diving, pre-engineering. What they are open to and what they are experiencing is something that you cannot get in other areas. This school needs to be rebuilt, and that obviously is not the question. We need to keep moving on. I think any delay in this vote or to prolong it, and we will not see the school built. The City of Isle of Palms Council voted unanimously on a motion to rebuild this school. Please work on that and let's get this thing done.

Jim Henshaw, Isle of Palms

We have lived on Isle of Palms for 20 years, and we have a child at the school. As a parent leader at Sullivan's Island Elementary, I appreciate all that Town Council has done to continue the tradition of public education on the island. The school is easily one of the highest performing schools in the region, if not the state. The school works because it is a community school, one that embraces the leadership of the district, our principal, our faculty, our community and our students and parents. We look forward to moving the ball forward as quickly as possible so we can return our kids' school to its rightful place.

(End of Public Comment)

Mayor Smith stated that according to the amended agenda, each Council member will have a chance to respond to the speakers tonight. We will begin with Councilwoman Cooper.

Councilwoman Cooper: I have children in the school. Council has spent a lot of time looking at the issues such as traffic and the impact on water and sewer. Unfortunately, when you negotiate a legal document it cannot be done totally in public. Those issues were all discussed and the interesting thing tonight that I find troubling is when I hear people say they don't want people from off island coming to the school. We are not a gated community; we are a town, and a suburb of one of the fastest growing places on the eastern seaboard. I think the lesson for our children is about exclusivity and being open to all kinds of people and all kinds of opportunities. Nothing in the lease prevents us from having the best school that fits in with this community. There are 418 kids enrolled in the school today, and 105 are from Sullivan's Island. That's more compared to the past. I have spoken to many parents who didn't send their children there because of the quality of the facility; not for any other reason. I think having a new facility that fits into our community will be an asset to every single one of us, not just the Town of Sullivan's Island. As an elected official representing the Town, I think that everyone has been as open and as transparent as possible. When you look at the 5,000 cars per day in the summer, and then the carpool line for 30 minutes a day, twice a day; 400 versus 500 students is an illegitimate issue to say that is a make or break situation. I think that's not the real issue. I think at the design meeting, every single person should be there and should comment, and I expect the District will bring those back to us and we will look at improving anything that needs to be improved in the building. The elevation that was up earlier tonight is not the real elevation. The real elevation was printed in the Moultrie News that showed the school being dropped in behind the accreted land, and you can't see the building. I think that inaccurate facts have been portrayed as the real facts and that is the real discussion.

Councilwoman McGee: Thank you for coming tonight and for sharing your opinions. There are two questions I want to ask before I share my comments. I don't want anyone to feel uncomfortable, but if you are the parent of a child that is in the school currently and you are uncomfortable with Council proceeding with the lease tonight,

would you mind raising your hand? One parent. Thank you. My second question: If we didn't put the school there, there has been discussion about the cost of this land. If we didn't put the school there, how many of you would want us to sell that for additional residential homes? Two persons. I am just trying to say that the investment of the land is an investment in our children, and I don't know that we would want any other alternative use. For me, it's a question of scale. When I came on Council, I had concerns that the restaurants were too large. I came to understand for those restaurants to succeed they needed to be able to have that many seats. They needed to not be required to have parking on site. We want a viable commercial district so we have adjusted. We want a viable school so I think we have to accept that the school is going to be larger in size. I am terribly afraid of unintended consequences if we don't approve this lease tonight, and that we will be years without this school for these parents that worked so hard for it.

Councilman Kaynard: I am so happy to see so many people here. I don't know if I've been to a meeting of Council that has been as well attended as this meeting, and that is a compliment for each of you participating tonight. I am a great advocate of public participation. In a prior meeting of Council, there was a question asked about the cost being estimated at \$26.4 million, and why it is so expensive. Some of it has been published in articles, but maybe not all of this information. The cost estimate for the school is based upon the size of up to 500 students with a maximum conditioned space of 74,000 square feet. The \$26.4 million is all of the cost; it's not just construction cost. It includes what they call program cost, which is fixtures, furnishings, equipment, design cost, technology cost, all the construction costs, land improvements, including driveways and access and egress. So, it's the entire budget.

Now, by the way of comparison, some people have mentioned Mt. Pleasant Academy which contains 67,000 square feet and has an enrollment of up to about 500 students. It's program cost was \$19.1 million, and that was when construction was bid in 2008. So the construction cost relates to the cost in that year. There has been an escalation in construction costs since 2008 estimated at about 4.7%, so that would be an additional cost of about \$2.7 million in today's dollars. Mt. Pleasant Academy would cost around \$21.8 million at 67,000 square feet. There are substantial differences between Mt. Pleasant Academy and Sullivan's Island Elementary School. Some of the differences can result in higher cost. First, Sullivan's Island School is proposed as 7,000 square feet larger at 74,000 square feet. That's the maximum square footage; there is no mandate that it is going to be 74,000 square feet. This is due to the addition of three project labs in the Sullivan's Island school of about 1,100 square feet each that are not in Mt. Pleasant Academy. That's the first big difference. The second is that your Council members and design committee requested that we not have a façade of the building that is a straight front, from one end to the other with no relief. We asked that there be some relief and some segmentation of that design. As a result of that request, it was broken up into three buildings. The result of that design request increased the amount of square footage. Third, the foundation of the school cost \$2.2 million more than Mt. Pleasant Academy since it's elevated to meet the federal flood elevation

requirements. And it also requires more stairs and more ramps for access than Mt. Pleasant Academy, which is at build-up grade, so it doesn't require as much height to get to it.

As for the square footage and the size of the school, my best information is that if you reduce the student enrollment as has been suggested by some of our residents from 500 to 350, this would not dramatically reduce the size of the building. I've been told that the basic footprint for the building by the school district for 350 students is 63,000 square feet. That's the basic footprint for a school of that size. Based on this information, it's not going to make a substantial difference in the size of the building unless you took space out that we put in for the façade design, or you took out the three labs.

Now, I also want to say that this hasn't been said much, and it should be said. This Council inherited the school under a lease that was signed in 1954. It was signed by the State of S. C. and the School District. This was before there was a Town of Sullivan's Island. It's about a two page lease, and it is for 99 years. Now what that means is there is 42 years left on the lease that the school district has currently. If we did not adopt a lease or change the lease, they have 42 years to go on the existing lease. I'm not saying the District would do this, but there is nothing in this existing lease that restricts the District in any way to building anything on that property they want to build. They have a lease for 99 years on approximately 14 acres of property, including some of the accreted land.

It is important to consider the lease tonight because here are some of the things it does provide that we do not have under the current lease. (1) We will reclaim for the Town eight acres of land, most of that acreage is accreted land. (2) The lease limits the use to an elementary school only. (3) The property would revert to the Town if it was not used as an elementary school for 24 months. (4) The new lease would prohibit any sublease of the property or any other use of the property. (5) The new lease would give the Town the right to approve the design. (6) The property itself is not zoned. The zoning code does not limit the size of what is built on the land. The school and that lease pre-dated the zoning code so it was not included in the zoning code. The new lease gives the Town enforcement powers under our zoning ordinance. (7) There are buffers on both sides of the building that prevents the school district from going up to the boundaries, and provides protections for these residents. (8) The new lease requires three public meetings before the lease is approved. There is one on September 22, 2011; one in January 2012, and one in May 2012. (9) The new lease provides for the joint use of the school facility. (10) The new lease provides for payment to the Town of \$175,000 for impact to infrastructure. It was not a requirement, but we negotiated that. The question was asked tonight about the school district being charged \$162,000 for a building permit. I don't think a building permit applies to this school because it's a state facility, but I could be corrected, and am in favor of charging for the building permit if we can. (11) A provision in the new lease states that any unexpected costs during the construction phase to completion of the building is borne by the school district. (12) The lease terminates the existing lease of 99 years. The new lease is for 75 years, but it has all the previous protections built into it. (13) The Town is getting indemnified against liabilities for the use of the property. (14) The lease

provides the final design of this school. There can be no construction until this Council approves the final design of the school. So we have every opportunity during the design phase. We have only gone through the conceptual design phase to get to where we are now, which is really the outline of the building. We are now supposed to spend six months in the design development phase, and everyone should come participate.

Councilman O'Neil: Some of the things I have dealt with on Council have been the zoning and restriction of size and design of buildings on the island. I think it's important to recognize that this specific structure is built for the community. It is not built for a single property owner, and should be something the entire community can feel ownership of and be proud of. I want to emphasize what Jerry said and reiterate the fact that there are a number of steps built into this lease that allow the Town and the citizens to have a tremendous amount of input into the design. You just heard the square footage numbers, the maximum height number (for one unit), and those numbers are the maximum numbers, they are not requirements. I would encourage everyone to come to the meetings and give input about the design. I am fully supportive of the school, and I think it could be smaller and lower than they're trying to make it, but we need to let them hear that. Look at the design, study it, and please give your input to the representatives of the school district. I keep hearing about 60 island kids at the school, let me do something. Would you please raise your hand if either you have a child at the school, you have had a child at the school, or you've been a child at the school. Thank you. Decisive majority. The school is important for a community's stability. It provides a center of gravity just like the commercial district does. This is not a gated community or a suburb, it is Sullivan's Island. And, as Dr. Selby pointed out very well, we have a history going back hundreds and hundreds of years here.

Councilman Perkis I think most of the concerns have been answered, but I made some notes about some other questions tonight. As far as our utilities, our sewer plant treats about 567,000 gallons a day sewer flow. The sewer usage at the school was about 4 gallons a student; the industry says that it should be 15 gallons. If you do the numbers, and say 150 students at 15 gallons a day, that's about 2,250 gallons. That is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% of our daily flow. That's statistically insignificant. It is not going to impact our ability to handle the flow through our sewer plants. There was a question about water. Actually, we do have a concern about water. Losing the school. The school bought about 428,000 gallons of water from us in its last full year of operation. If we don't sell water, that lost revenue has to be made up by the rest of us. Can we supply it? Absolutely we can supply it. Our contract with Charleston Water System requires them to supply 750,000 gallons a day of water. We use about 200,000-250,000 gallons a day. So, we have about 500,000 gallons of water that we're not using. Our contract with Charleston Water System actually makes us pay a penalty if we use less than what's in the contract, so the less we take from them, the more we pay. The more we take from them on a per gallon basis, the less we will pay. So, as far as the utility is concerned, water pressure, flow, and supply are not an issue.

There have been questions about the traffic. I pulled up the SCDOT traffic count and if you look at it during the hours that people are over here for the school from 8-9 am and 3-4 pm, there's about 550-600 cars a day coming over 703. That is not including cars from Sullivan's Island or Isle of Palms. So, the cars coming over to Sullivan's Island on a daily basis per hour is probably 700-800. If we add one bus and about 30-40 more cars coming over for two hours a day, it will have no adverse effect on our street infrastructure. Some people have called me saying Council has not looked at the property as an historic site. The School District did look at that component. They hired a company called Brockington Associates who presented to us their evaluation of the school site and they found no historical artifacts. And finally, if we want to be and the County to be fiscally responsible with our money, it's clear that a 500 student school is considerably more effective use of our dollars than a 350 student school. Should the school be 74,000 square feet? The lease does not require it; it only sets a maximum. It probably could be a little smaller and lower, and we need continued input from you on the design. Please come to the meeting on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. I am going to vote in support of the Second Reading.

Councilwoman Watson: I have been on the island for 22 years. Both of my children went to Sullivan's Island School, and I have been a teacher at Sullivan's Island Elementary for those 22 years. I have the school improvement council report to the community here that Jim Henshaw and his committee put together which is a dynamic document. I just want to reiterate that we have received an excellent rating every year and the Palmetto Gold Award since its inception in 1998. I want to say a little bit about the magnet status that we have now. The magnet has offered me as a teacher opportunities and professional development that I have just not had. For example, some teachers and parents had the opportunity to learn about oyster restoration at the conservancy. Now that we're a magnet school, we have resources, community resources, and the resources of other businesses in the area that want to help us. I have Sullivan's Island, Isle of Palms, and magnet students in my class. They all offer insight and expertise in their areas. It doesn't matter where they come from; children are children and they have value in the classroom. I think the magnet has offered the kids and teachers opportunities. Kids are excited and I just may have a budding marine biologist in the class.

Mayor Smith: Thanks to everyone for coming, and thank you Council members for your comments. Some excellent points were made by Jerry about the lease. My problem with the lease, that deals with the design, is that it establishes two major functions of the design: 500 students and 74,000 square feet. I absolutely support the school on the island. My wife taught there and my daughter went there. If we have a 300 student school, that would handle the students from Sullivan's Island and Isle of Palms. I liked what I heard from Eddie Fava and Vince Graham; both about scale and design. We do have a meeting on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and I am anxious to see what the District has to present. I am all about the history of the island and some major things we've done over the years that have made this island what it is. For example, for the bridge issue, we were told year after year that no federal funds

could be used to rehabilitate the Ben Sawyer Bridge. All of a sudden funds did come available, and we have the rehabilitated bridge.

Mayor Smith asked if Council had any final remarks before there was a motion for second reading of the ordinance; there were none.

**Motion was made by Councilwoman Watson, seconded by Councilman Kaynard, to have Second Reading of An Ordinance to Amend the Ordinances of the Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, Chapter 14, By Adding a New Section 34, Regarding Lease of Property to Charleston County School District, carried by a vote of 6-1, with Mayor Smith casting the opposing vote.**

**Motion was made by Councilman Kaynard, seconded by Councilwoman Watson, that Council designate Mayor Pro Tem Mike Perkis to represent Council at the School Board meeting and present our position on this lease in this ordinance, carried unanimously.**

The Council then went into the Committees of Council portion of the meeting.

Councilwoman McGee has items on the Streets and Maintenance Committee that need to be discussed tonight, and Administrator Benke has a few items to review.

**Administrator's Report** – Administrator Benke reported that the Charleston County Board of Elections and Voter Registration had forwarded a request to the Department of Justice which would change the Sullivan's Island polling place from the elementary school at 2015 I'on Avenue to 3222 Middle Street at Sunrise Presbyterian Church. The Palmetto 200 Race is requesting permission to transit through Sullivan's Island on April 14, 2012 for the fourth consecutive annual race. No Town staff will be required for the event. We received a request from the Company C, Fourth Battalion, One Hundred Eighteenth Infantry (Light) in support of a joint proclamation of "We Care Day" for the National Guard. A resolution has been prepared for Nicky Bluestein's service to the Planning Commission and will be presented at the next Council meeting. Several pieces of correspondence were received thanking Sullivan's Island staff for their help for incidents on the island: The Strubler family of Indiana sent a note of appreciation to Curt Gibbons, Collins Corbett and Jamie Howard when their son was stung by a jelly fish; Bobbie Cook of Arizona sent a note of appreciation to Greg Gress for the notice about Hurricane Irene; Rachel Rephan and Phil Ginsburg, residents of New York City and Sullivan's Island, sent a note of appreciation to Office Horne, Lieutenant Levay and Firefighter Sharpe for their help during a beach path incident, and Chief Leon Boyd of the Mt. Pleasant Fire Department sent a letter commending Sullivan's Island personnel for life savings efforts on August 17, 2011. Councilman O'Neil stated he would like to have commendations prepared for everyone involved. Administrator Benke also mentioned that about a week later there was a water rescue for two swimmers who were swept off the sandbar and one swimmer almost drowned.

### **Streets and Maintenance, Councilwoman McGee**

The Real Estate and Streets & Maintenance Committees had a workshop this morning. The Greenbelt application needs to be reviewed at the next regular Council meeting, with the intent to sign the contract accepting the funds by the October Council meeting. The Committees proposed how to begin the process of determining the best way to get help on this issue. The Committees suggested that a request for proposal be drafted asking for professional contractor to design, build, oversee the building, help monitor and evaluate the impact of nature trails in the general vicinity of Station 13 to Station 18. Different ways of building these trails need to be tested to determine what is least invasive on the habitat, most invasive on the cut myrtles, and most helpful for the wildlife. The Committees wanted a draft of the RFP to be presented to Council to prepare for final version. Council authorized Administrator Benke to draft the RFP for the nature trails of the Greenbelt fund. Councilwoman McGee stated additionally if the contractor could express methods of educational outreach to the community, volunteer help, and other ways of getting the work done. Councilwoman Watson stated she would bring nature trail guides prepared by Carol Killough for Council to review. Also Chief Stith and Administrator Benke will contact Jeff Jackson for possibly helping with working on the beach paths with the Maintenance department, using some of the new guidelines that Council has considered.

The Committee also talked about the estimate received for the sidewalk between Station 22-1/2 and 23 at roughly \$50,000 for design, stormwater and concrete. Additionally, Administrator Benke shared preliminary comments about discussion with DOT about the intersection. The S.C. DOT is considering an all-way stop at Station 22-1/2 and Middle Streets, as well as eliminating the second lane eastbound that goes straight through to Isle of Palms. Mayor Smith and Councilwoman McGee are scheduled to meet with DOT next week, and will report back to Council.

Middle Street crosswalks - Administrator Benke has the estimate for improving the striping in the crosswalks at Middle Street. Knock-down signs will also be ordered by Chief Howard for placement in the street. Council agreed to authorize \$5,000-\$6,000 to be spent by staff for the additional striping.

Managed Parking – Councilwoman McGee went over the schedule of events to date of the managed parking plan. The next step is to identify a consultant. They have received information as a “keep it simple” plan, to possibly start incrementally. It is an on-line ticketing and decal-based system without a heavy investment in kiosks. The ballpark estimate for the study and plan is \$8,000, with details through implementation costing about another \$12,000 if Council decides to implement with the consultant. The consensus of council was to authorize Administrator Benke to pursue getting a proposal for a consultant to help us be ready by December to make some decisions on managed parking.

Councilman Perkis reported that the auditors will be at the next Council meeting to present their audit for FY2010.



**Motion was made by Councilwoman Watson, seconded by Councilman O'Neil to adjourn at 8:55 pm, carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Miller  
Town Clerk