

**TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**  
**Town Council Emergency Meeting**  
**May 13, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

The May 13, 2021, Emergency Town Council meeting was conducted as a video conference using Zoom and was simultaneously made available to the public via YouTube live stream, all in keeping with practices adopted to address the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Mayor Gregg, Councilmembers Finke and Fox, Town Administrator Cronin and Town Clerk Allbritton participated in the meeting. Mayor Gregg called the meeting to order. This meeting was called to consider Emergency Ordinance 2021-03. The Town Clerk confirmed that notice of the meeting was properly posted, and the requirements of the SC Freedom of Information Act had been met.

Mayor Gregg stated that this meeting was being held to consider changes to the Town's Emergency Ordinance. Council was provided a copy of a marked-up version of 2021-03 that reflected changes from Emergency Ordinance 2021-02 as well as a clean copy. Councilwoman Finke made a motion to approve Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 as presented. Councilwoman Fox seconded the motion. Mayor Gregg polled Council for their thoughts on the proposed ordinance.

- Councilwoman Finke stated that the Governor's Order upsets her because she feels it is based on his politics and ignores SC DHEC's recommendations and usurps the Town's local authority. She commended the Town Administrator's efforts on redrafting the Town's Emergency Ordinance. She agrees with the Town encouraging people to get vaccinated and the two "whereas clauses" (Page 10 of the marked-up version), which acknowledge that the Town is looking at the opinions of medical experts and the Governor is not letting the Town use that information. She also supports Town Council continuing with virtual meetings until we are sure the pandemic is under control.
- Pat Fox remarked that Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 is a toothless ordinance and not sure it is even worth consideration. She noted that most public comments are in favor of removing any mask mandates and we are. She also noted uncertainty as to including recommendations in view of people knowing they can wear masks if they want to do so. She expressed support for allowing Council or committee members, if they were uncomfortable coming into Town Hall for a meeting, to join the meeting by phone and be allowed to vote. She noted her disfavor for the two "whereas clauses," previously identified, as she thinks they are unnecessary and inflammatory.
- Mayor Gregg added that Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 does reflect the Governor's Executive Order in that the Order continues to encourage wearing face coverings under circumstances when it is not feasible to practice social distancing; and, because the Town has had that language in our emergency ordinances for some time, he supports the wording that would encourage certain practices. He stated that he wants to continue with the adoption of an Emergency Ordinance to address the circumstances pertaining to the conduct of meetings, as well as requirements for temporary use permits. Mayor Gregg also expressed support for inclusion of encouragement of people to be vaccinated as it is consistent with the Governor's Order. Mayor Gregg noted the two "whereas clauses" are not necessary to the substance of the ordinance and he would prefer that those be deleted.

Mayor Gregg moved to amend the proposed Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 by removing the two "whereas clauses" that have been previously identified and Councilwoman Fox seconded the motion. The vote was 2 to 1 to remove the clauses.

Councilwoman Fox stated that she thinks Sec. 2 (b)(6) should be deleted because she does not think the Town needs to recommend that masks be worn on boardwalks. The Town Administrator added that all the numbered items, 1 through 6, could be deleted and said that Sec. 2 (b) Face Covering could end after the word "guidance". Councilwoman Fox made a motion to strike "including" and the 6

numbered items from Sec. 2 (b). Mayor Gregg seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous. The vote to approve Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 as amended was unanimous.

**Citizens/Guests Presentations, Comments:**

The Town Clerk reported on comments that were received in advance of the meeting:

- Carol Price, 2500 Clear Marsh Road –opposed to Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 and favored removing the mask mandate.
- Cat Russo – 2105 Loblolly Lane – noted uncertainty of support for approval of Emergency Ordinance 2021-03. She noted the requirement to wear a mask should only be encouraged since greater than 75% of the Charleston County population over age 65 has been fully vaccinated.
- Darryl May – 1131 Ocean Forest –opposed to Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 as drafted. He noted that, for the critically important goal of encouraging vaccination to be fully realized, the language encouraging mask wearing should be deleted.
- Dick Wildermann, 3138 Privateer Creek Road – noted it was premature for Governor McMaster to order an end to mask mandates. He and his wife strongly support Emergency Ordinance 2021-03 for the reasons clearly and fully spelled out in the ordinance.
- Geoff Freeman – 2455 Cat Tail Pond – opposed to the Emergency Ordinance. He noted much of the ordinance is fine but there is no justification for encouraging continued mask wearing outdoors, particularly among those that are already vaccinated.
- Ilse Calcagno – 2981 Hidden Oak Drive – favored the Emergency Ordinance. She noted we will never achieve herd immunity and would like to encourage the wearing of masks, distancing, and vaccinations.
- Jeff Sullivan – 3623 Loggerhead – opposed to the Emergency Ordinance. He noted wearing a mask inside, on public transit and probably even in certain crowded outdoor situations makes sense. He commented that in most cases, spreading Coronavirus is unlikely outdoors.
- Joanne Gallivan – 2759 Old Oak Walk – commented that masks should be required everywhere that the ordinance encourages wearing a mask, noting that we are still in a pandemic and that we do not know if visitors are vaccinated, and they can still spread this deadly virus.
- John Maher – 2670 Gnarled Pine – opposed the ordinance noting he and his wife are against wearing a mask and forced vaccination. He stated that a mask on someone is nothing more than fear and it creates an atmosphere that things are not right on Seabrook Island.
- Kathy Maher – 3315 Seabrook Island Road- favored the Emergency Ordinance. She noted support for exercise classes being conducted without masks if everyone is vaccinated.
- Lisa Owens – favored no masks – or choice – but not mandatory.
- Patrick Weyers – 3595 Seabrook Island Road – favored the Emergency Ordinance. He thanked the Town for acting to protect the health of the Town’s residents during this once in a generation pandemic.
- Rob Savin – observed there is no valid reason for Council to continue online meetings. He stated doing so is undemocratic.
- Robin Girardi – 816 Treeloft Trace – favored the Emergency Ordinance and noted that the burden of prevention using face coverings or avoiding public places and activities

should rest with the unvaccinated; those who have been vaccinated should be rewarded with greater access to pre-COVID requirements.

- Tom & Tara Olson – 3560 Seaview Drive – favored the Emergency Ordinance and noted they favor removing the mandatory wearing of face coverings.
- Valerie Doane- 923 Deer Point Drive – supported the Town encouraging but not mandating the wearing of face masks within the Town. She also noted there is no science behind the 6 ft. social distance rule and asked Council to please evaluate accordingly.
- Kelly Ellsworth – stated it was unfortunate that we can only encourage use of masks and social distancing, noting that many residents are vaccinated but the status of vacationers is not known. The comment suggested that the Town consider signage on boardwalks and/or coming on-island that the Town encourages all to wear masks, to practice social distancing and to get the vaccine.

Councilwoman Finke stated that she, personally, had received 25-30 emails relating to the Emergency Ordinance. She added that a lot of people send comments to her because they do not want their names read out at the meeting. She also added that a lot of Seabrook Island residents think that everyone on the island has been vaccinated; but, from the comments she has received, she knows of 12 couples that do not intend to get vaccinated. Councilwoman Fox commented that she thinks people, who want to comment, should go through the proper channels to make their comments heard because she reads and considers every comment. She added that, even though Council is meeting remotely, every comment that is directed in an appropriate way is forwarded to every member of Town Council. Councilwoman Finke stated that she does have a standard response for the people sending comments to her that guides them to the Town's website and the comment portal.

Town Administrator Cronin responded to the comment about the Town's virtual meeting process being undemocratic. He stated that the Town has had more participation in the governing process in the last 14 months than they ever have. Before virtual meetings, there was rarely anyone who attended the Public Hearings or Town Council meetings. Councilwoman Fox has been putting meeting clips on Tidelines so that people do not have to sit through a whole meeting to see the part that interests them. Currently, people can watch the Town's meetings even if they do not live locally and if they work during the day while the meeting is being held. Town Administrator Cronin added that the Town has won an award from the SC Municipal Association for its website and the public comment portal. He added that, once Council does start in-person meetings, the Town is still looking at ways to make meetings more accessible to the public. He assured property owners that every single comment that is sent in is forwarded to Council. In response to a question about when in-person meetings might begin, Mayor Gregg stated that, if there was significant response to an agenda item, he does not feel Council Chambers can safely accommodate as many people as might be interested in attending.

The Town Administrator remarked that, even though the Town does not mandate face coverings, that does not infringe on the right of a business establishment or organization – SIPOA, Seabrook Island Club, Marina, Town Hall, etc. – from enforcing their own requirements. He added that, when Town Hall employees were polled, they expressed a preference to continue with measures the Town Hall currently has in place, which would include such things as requiring a face covering, enhanced cleaning, Plexiglas screen at the front desk, restricted access to building, etc.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.



Date: June 23, 2021

---

Town Clerk