

Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association (WTNA)  
Charleston, SC 20403

October 17, 2023

WTNA Board Members

Petar Lemajic, President  
Jarett Nicholson, Vice-President  
DonnaMarie Patten, Treasurer  
Nancy Wilson, Secretary  
Anna Lee Turner, Board Member  
Susan Cale, Board Member  
Jeanie Knowlton, Board Member

Re: Community Access to the Water in Wagener Terrace

Dear Councilman William Dudley Gregorie:

As you know, Wagener Terrace is a diverse community made up of eclectic, historic homes and beautiful views of the Ashley River and Halsey Creek. Currently, however, there is no maintained public access to one of the most important assets in the community: the waterfront. The neighborhood hugs the east bank of the Ashley River, and Halsey Creek winds its way through the middle of the neighborhood, from 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue all the way to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and the Ashley River. As members of the community, we ask City officials to work with the neighborhood association, community residents, and local stakeholders to improve community access to the water. We want to assure that our current residents, and our children and grandchildren, can enjoy and learn from this historic waterfront. There used to be several public docks and landings in the neighborhood, and we would like to restore and improve upon those precedents.

Listed below are several waterfront locations and proposals that could add value and public access to residents in Wagener Terrace:

From north to south:

- 1) The **Longborough Dock** area: As you are probably aware, City Council agreed to rebuild and maintain the dock for public use at this location. However, as far as we know, no official action since at least 2019 has been taken to act on this agreement. There remains a large "Private Property" sign at the entrance to this viewing area. Historically, this was public land enjoyed by the community, but currently it is still privately owned by Longborough's HOA. **We recommend that the city:** Restore public access to the dock area and remove the "Private Property" sign.
- 2) The walk along **10<sup>th</sup> Avenue**: Adjacent to Mary Ellen Drive and Gordon Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue offers sweeping views of Halsey Creek, to the west and east. There are sidewalks on both sides of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue; however, there is very little in the way of maintenance in the area. **We recommend that the city:** Place a few benches along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue for residents to stop and view the marsh; support native plant restoration along the shoreline to reduce soil erosion and beautify the area; and approve historical signage interpreting the creek, as researched and proposed by the Preservation Society of Charleston.
- 3) Public Right of Way at **9<sup>th</sup> Avenue**: At the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Gordon Street, the public right of way extends all the way to Halsey Creek and the marsh, approximately 100 ft in length and 60ft wide. The area is full of invasive vines and vegetative debris, but still offers open views. **We recommend that the city:** Install a gravel pathway with a bench near the waterfront and "Public Right of Way" sign. A small "crab dock" or viewing platform to appreciate the creek would be a welcome addition. The adjacent property owners, to the west of the ROW, have already expressed their support for community access at this spot and have contacted City officials about beautifying the area.

- 4) Corner of **3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**: At the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Wagener Avenue, there is a public right of way that could be cleaned up and beautified to offer views of Halsey Creek and the marsh. Adjacent property owners, parcel ID 463-10-03-081, are also willing to share the corner of their property with the community. This location has recently been discussed by the City's Public Works and Utilities Committee, where several City Council members and the Mayor expressed support. Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association has previously voted to maintain public access to the ROW and the marsh. **We recommend that the city:** In addition to restoring native plant restoration, install a gravel pathway with a bench near the waterfront and "Public Right of Way" sign.
- 5) End of **St. Margaret Street**: At the intersection of St. Margaret Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue there is an L-shaped lot that offers sunset views of the Ashley River and vistas, across the river, of the original Charles Towne settlement. The lot is owned, in part, by the city, and in part, by Patrick Properties Hospitality Group (PPHG). The Executive Director of PPHG has met with City Officials and members of the Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association, and expressed their desire to clean up the area for the benefit of the community. This is one of the most prominent and visited waterfront locations in the neighborhood, but currently the lot is often treated like a parking spot and has turned into a dirt patch. **We recommend that City's** leadership work with PPHG to develop and implement a plan for this historic waterfront.
- 6) End of **Grove Street**: At the public right of way of Grove Street to the Ashley River, there is a small "spit" or pointe. The area provides habitat for wildlife, and includes a small trail, surrounded by scrub oak and palmetto, that leads to the water. **We recommend that the city:** Install a gravel pathway with a bench near the waterfront and "Public Right of Way" sign.
- 7) End of **Dunnemann Street**: at the end of Dunnemann Street, there is a 4-acre parcel of undeveloped land overlooking the Ashley River. This parcel is owned by the Citadel, but is currently only used to store mulch and gravel. Considering its prime waterfront location, this could make for an excellent collaboration between the College, the neighborhood, and the City. Considering the fact that the City of Charleston granted this land (a total of 176 acres) to the Citadel in 1922, it seems fitting that the Citadel would find a way to share some of its waterfront with the community. **We recommend that the city:** Coordinate with the Citadel and neighborhood to restore public access to the 4 acre parcel of land for the development of a water access easement.

This is just an outline of possibilities. It would be incredible and hugely beneficial if all of these locations were improved, planted with native species to support lowcountry wildlife, and made accessible for recreational and community use. It could become a "green-blue way" around the neighborhood – a valued asset for generations to come. We realize, though, that City resources and staffing are limited. Any one of these locations, to start, would be greatly appreciated by Wagener Terrace residents. We also know that several nonprofit organizations and individuals in the community are willing to donate or help fundraise if the City's financial sources are a limiting factor. Considering that much of the shoreline along the Ashley River and Halsey Creek were once open to the community, it seems more than appropriate for the City to be involved and help the community regain access to the water in their neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted,



Petar Lemajic  
President WTNA