

A special meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") was held on Wednesday, March 13, 2002, in the County Council Chambers of the Beaufort County Administration Building at 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, South Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Jim Hicks, Chair
Mr. Jerome Goode
Ms. Margie Jenkins
Mr. Thomas Mike, Sr.

Mr. Ben Johnson, III, Vice Chair
Ms. Joy Guyer
Mr. Paul Keyserling
Mr. Mike Zara

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. John Abney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: None

STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Anthony J. Criscitiello, Planning Director
Mr. Ian Hill, Historic Preservationist
Ms. Barbara Childs, Administrative Assistant to the Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Hicks called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Hicks led those assembled in the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Hicks explained the history and the process the Commission will follow regarding the review of the Comprehensive Plan. The next Commission meeting on the Comprehensive Plan review will be April 10, 2002, where the natural resources element will be presented.

CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT OF THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chairman Hicks noted that the staff would review the written recommendations from the Towns of Bluffton and Hilton Head for this element.

Mr. Hill briefed the Commissioners on the vision in the Comprehensive Plan regarding cultural resources, the 1997 survey of above ground historic resources in Beaufort County, the survey that began in 1999 of rural cemeteries not associated with churches, and the Historic Preservation Review Board's review of this element and the Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance/ZDSO in relation to the Comprehensive Plan review of this element. He noted other

preservation efforts such as the Lobeco School renovation as a future public library, the fish haul tabby ruins on Hilton Head Island at Barker Field that is the remains of slave cabins of the Drayton Plantation, the protection of the Gullah Culture via the Cultural Protection Overlay District on St. Helena Island, and the S.C. Department of Transportation Scenic Roads program for Highway 46 and possibly Old Sheldon Church Road.

The following are Significant Issues & Recommendations:

1. Issue: Consider historic resources in disaster planning efforts.
Recommendation: Forward the County Disaster Mitigation Plan, when completed, to the Historic Preservation Review Board for review.
2. Issue: Provide tax relief for owners who rehabilitate historic properties.
Recommendation: Pass local legislation to temporarily freeze property tax assessments at pre-rehabilitation levels, as allowed by the South Carolina state enabling legislation.

(Note: Mr. Goode entered meeting at 6:27 p.m.)

Mr. Hill discussed the items that had not been completed. Chairman Hicks noted that several items were not completed because of financial constraints. He asked the Planning staff to give its recommendations on those items that should be dropped from the cultural resources element, if any.

DEMOGRAPHICS ELEMENT

Mr. Criscitiello briefed the Commissioners. Much of the demographics are awaiting the receipt of the 2000 Census data. However, staff has been able to gather some information. Beaufort County leads the state in growth rates. It is 2.6% faster than the state rate. Growth and land consumption issues will be analyzed. Port Royal Island remains as the most populous area, with Bluffton as the second most. A 20-year trend, the population density (persons per square miles), and the racial and age profiles are included in this element. Due to more racial choices in the 2000 Census, a direct comparison of the races is difficult. The median age is increasing and the County continues to get "older".

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

1. Ms. Wendy Zara complimented the staff's work on this review, including the status boxes indicating completed or uncompleted items. She was pleased to see municipality and LCOG representation at this meeting. She wanted to see more cultural protection issues for the Sheldon township since more blacks live there than on St. Helena and consideration to include Sheldon Township into the Cultural Protection Overlay District. Prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, she noted the public's repeated concern for access to fishing holes and did not see it addressed in this element. She would like to see Kinloch Road in Dale added to the Historic Highways list.
2. Mr. Peter Dawson of Burton has reviewed the plan and a lot of things are intertwined around the 1% sales tax, including the proposed Beaufort beltway. While one faction is looking to alleviate traffic into downtown Beaufort, another is spending money to bring traffic into downtown Beaufort. While one faction is looking to alleviate traffic on the historic Woods Memorial Bridge, the City of Beaufort is looking for an alternative route to Lady's Island. A beltway around Beaufort would dislocate many people and change

the character of Beaufort. The expansive beltway funding to deviate people from Charleston to Harbor, Hunting and Fripp Islands causes him great concern. He noted that the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan recommended that Beaufortians leave five days prior to a storm/hurricane. Make escape routes so Beaufortians can evacuate in one day, not five days. Personal revenue leaves Beaufort with the evacuees; the less time spent away from Beaufort means more revenue spent in Beaufort. Spend the money to widen Highways 21 and 17 or build a bridge to Charleston to expedite evacuation instead of dislocating the cultural values and disturbing the marshes to alleviate the traffic from Downtown Beaufort.

3. Mr. Reed Armstrong suggested adding in the Cultural Resources element a bibliography of books and films that contain Beaufort history and culture.
4. Ms. Carol Tuynman noted it was fitting that the cultural resource element was the first element reviewed. The County has already identified and cataloged thousands of historic structures and archaeological sites. It is clearly an indication that Beaufortians value their diverse history and culture. Our historic built environment is laden with rich information of our cultural, social and political past. Our natural environment resources give Beaufort the highest quality of life environments possible today. Both resources attract people to Beaufort for a multitude of reasons. Let's work together to preserve and protect our most valuable resources for by good stewardship future generations will be able to enjoy these riches too. On Policy 5, avoid having the County carry out activities that duplicate what other agencies already do. On Policies 5 and 6, speak of collaborations and partnerships that foster activities so that the county does not have to take on the responsibility of speaker bureaus. On Section 6.2, set pre-rehabilitation assessments to aid those rehabilitating historic buildings. On Section 8.3, clarify the wording to state "to explore options that will decrease the impact on historic resources by traffic and result in pollution." She notes many transportation alternatives besides the ferry system, such as boat service, bicycle and pedestrian pathways, rideshare, park and ride, etc. On Section 10.1, set tonnage limitation to reduce large vehicular traffic on certain roads. And, she supports the inclusion of Sheldon Township in the cultural protection overlay district. (Mr. Hill clarified that the County was able to get the South Carolina Department of Transportation to reduce the speed limit and post historic markers on Old Sheldon Church Road, but they did not agree to limit the type of traffic on the road.)
5. Ms. Mary Dawson of Burton reiterated that people are cultural resources also, and people need to be saved from development. If the Beaufort bypass is built, a lot of neighborhoods will disappear. The building of the Air Station forces many to move into Burton. When you start cutting areas for more roads to facilitate growth, people who cannot help themselves are pushed out. We don't want to be a County that talks about our culture and our history, but have little plaques that say these people were here. We want to be here for a good while.

Discussion included correlating the increased tourism visitation to the same period of growth, the reason for growth in the five highest growth areas in South Carolina, the status of including Sheldon Township in the cultural protection overlay district, the enforcement process to maintain cultural resources, the state law penalties that are not significant and requires proof of felonious intent, and clearcutting concerns.

Chairman Hicks noted that staff would determine the inclusion of appropriate comments in the Comprehensive Plan review.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Hicks adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:25 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Barbara Ann C. Childs, Admin. Assistant to Planning Director

Jim Hicks, Chairman, Beaufort County Planning Commission

APPROVED: **April 10, 2002**