

The regular meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") was held on Wednesday, November 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. Matthew Margotta
Mr. Mike Zara

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. John Abney

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: None

STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Anthony J. Criscitiello, Planning Director
Ms. Barbara Ann C. Childs, Administrative Assistant to the Planning Director
Mr. Robert Merchant, Development Review Planner

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Hicks called the meeting to order at approximately 6:04 p.m.

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

REVIEW OF MINUTES: The minutes of the October 9, 2002, Commission meeting were reviewed. No corrections were noted. **MOTION: Ms. Jenkins made a motion, and Mr. Margotta seconded, to accept as written the minutes of the October 9, 2002, meeting. The motion was carried (FOR: Jenkins, Margotta and Zara; ABSTAINED: Johnson and Mike).**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Hicks asked the Commissioners to consider the merit of a County Planning Commissioners Workshop on Tuesday, November 19, 2002, at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room to further discuss the Future Land Use element review.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None was received.

PRESENTATION OF THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT REVIEW OF THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Criscitiello briefed Commissioners. He mentioned the cooperation with the municipalities regarding this element review, and he would like to see such cooperation with the County School District and Beaufort-Jasper Water-Sewer Authority/BJWSA. He showed a power point presentation that included a statistical analysis showing development in the County since 1980; development trends for the County; the anticipated growth in Planned Unit Developments/PUDs, priority investment areas, and the Town of Bluffton; and maps showing the areas annexed by the municipalities, existing public facilities and existing water and sewer line extensions. The staff recommendations include developing a Southern Beaufort County regional plan, participating in the Joint Land Use Study/JLUS, prioritizing and reducing the number of Community Preservation/CP Districts, supporting and developing in-fill and redevelopment strategies, reevaluating rural district clustering and finding alternatives to rural residential districts, supporting intergovernmental planning, and deleting the Transfer Development Rights/TDR Program from the Comprehensive Plan.

Note: Ms. Guyer entered at 6:09 p.m., and Mr. Goode entered at 6:12pm

Public Comment:

1. Mr. Claude McLeod of Seabrook and Northern Beaufort County said it was time to correct the many errors in the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan. Northern Beaufort County has been deprived of enjoying the American Dream. The Comprehensive Plan for Northern Beaufort County has been to preserve the poverty. Northern Beaufort County has been designated one of the most economically depressed area in the state and the nation. The lack of nearby jobs has been detrimental for the families in the area. No development (residential, commercial or light industrial) is allowed on the majority of the properties north of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station. Highways 21 and 17 and the state railroad travel through Northern Beaufort County. With the use of these resources and the land available, think of the potential for Northern Beaufort County. He noted a Southern Beaufort family that had been making a living off their land for 100 years had been put out of business for a year because of the restrictions placed by the Comprehensive Plan. Where public sewer is available, use of it is denied by the Comprehensive Plan for rural zoned property. Development on rural zoned property requires 75 to 80% open space. A density of one unit per three acres deprives people of the best use of their property. If a family needs to sell an acre of land for financial purposes, they cannot. A family cannot give an acre to their child to build a house to be near their family unless the family has owned the land for 50 years or more. Change this terrible plan that takes away a landowner's rights and freedom.
2. Mr. Reed Armstrong of the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League commended the staff on this review. The principle tenants of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan are to maintain a distinction between developed and rural areas of the County, and to manage growth. The public, by voting down the 1% sales tax, has shown that it wants

the government officials to take a serious approach to managing growth. We have to manage the growth patterns here.

3. Ms. Wendy Zara complimented the staff on this review. The updated statistics and timeline shows that the Comprehensive Plan did not stifle growth in the County. She said that property values could have been included in the statistics. The Comprehensive Plan has not stopped growth or depressed property values. The Comprehensive Plan stressed growth in the priority areas and the municipalities. Cluster development in rural areas is desirable, but higher density is not. She urged the staff not to restructure the Rural Residential/RR zoning from 5.0 acres to 5.1 acres per eligible lot. She would like to see an innovative plan for the rural areas. The Community Preservation/CP District for Sheldon has been tabled by Planning Committee. She would like to see that recommendation brought forward. She does not want to see new CP districts being developed ahead of those that were originally designated by the Comprehensive Plan. More housing development is not economic development. There are many existing industrial areas where new businesses may located; we just have not figured out how to bring the jobs/businesses to the County. She asked if the population projections were based on permitted lots or building permits granted. (Mr. Criscitiello said permitted lots in PUDs were used in the population projections.)

Discussion included the low quality growth and development had there not been a Comprehensive Plan, concern on the projections and the capacity to accommodate the anticipated growth, the need for “draconian” tools to slow growth or the quality of life will suffer, being constrained by our geography near the water but not near a major thoroughfare, a challenge to protect our environment that attracts the growth, the methods to prioritize CP areas, the two proposed schools located outside of the priority investment areas, discouragement vs. prohibition of new gated communities, and free access to the water by the general public.

The Commissioners agreed that the additional workshop Chairman Hicks mentioned earlier would be beneficial to further discuss this element review.

Additionally, the Commissioners would like to see how this element ties into the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, i.e. why have Priority Investment Areas, why the recommended bridges, etc.

Chairman Hicks clarified that the annexations in Southern Beaufort County occurred because of a corporate decision to quit farming/cutting trees and to develop the land instead, and in Northern Beaufort County occurred due to Sec of State not declining to be annexed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. **County Planning Commission Workshop**, to further discuss the Future Land Use Element Review of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan, will be held on Tuesday, November 19, 2002, at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room. The public is invited to attend.

2. **Next Meeting:** The County Planning Commission will meet on December 11, 2002, to take action on the Future Land Use element review of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Guyer made a motion, and Ms. Jenkins seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed unanimously (FOR: Goode, Guyer, Jenkins, Johnson, Margotta, Mike and Zara. Chairman Hicks adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:13 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

Barbara Ann C. Childs, Admin. Assistant to Planning Director

Jim Hicks, Chairman, Beaufort County Planning Commission

APPROVED: December 11, 2002