

The regular meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") was held on Monday, May 4, 2009, in County Council Chambers, the Beaufort County Administration Building at 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, South Carolina.

Members Present:

Mr. Jim Hicks, Chair

Mr. Alan Herd, Vice Chair

Ms. Diane Chmelik

Ms. Mary LeGree

Mr. Ronald Petit

Mr. Edward Riley III

Members Absent: Mr. Frank Mullen, Mr. Robert Semmler and Mr. E. Parker Sutler

Staff Present:

Ms. Delores Frazier, Assistant Planning Director

Mr. Robert Merchant, Long-Range Planner

Ms. Barbara Childs, Admin. Asst. to 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 Chambers with the pledge of allegiance to the U.S.A. flag.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: The Commission reviewed their March 2, 2009, meeting minutes. The following corrections were noted:

- Page 4, after the motion, the second sentence should read, "Mr. Herd returned....";
- Page 4, regarding recessing the meeting, the time should read 7:12 p.m.;
- Page 7, item 1 in Other Business, after Lisa Sulka the sentence should read "..., Bluffton Town Mayor...."

A recommendation was made that the Commissioners should notify the secretary of minor typographical corrections prior to the meeting, and only bring forth substantive corrections during the Commission meeting. **Motion:** Mr. Herd made a motion, and Mr. Petit seconded the motion, **to accept the March 2, 2009, minutes as corrected.** The motion **was carried** (FOR: Chmelik, Herd, Hicks, LeGree, Petit, and Riley).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

1. **County Tree Ordinance:** Chairman Hicks noted that the Commission forwarded the tree ordinance to the Land Management Committee (now known as Natural Resources Committee). The ordinance was returned by that Committee to the Planning staff for rework. The Commission will have another opportunity to review the tree ordinance once the staff has completed the rework.

2. **County Rural Policy:** Mr. Hicks noted that County Council on April 27, 2009 had adopted the new rural policy, so the item was removed from tonight's Planning Commission agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT for items other than agenda items: None were received.

PROPOSED COOSAW ISLAND COMMUNITY PRESERVATION DISTRICT:

- **FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT FOR COOSAW AND JUDGE ISLANDS FROM RURAL (R) TO RURAL COMMUNITY PRESERVATION**
- **ZONING MAP AMENDMENT FOR COOSAW AND JUDGE ISLANDS FROM RURAL (R) AND RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RR) DISTRICTS TO THE NEWLY FORMED COOSAW ISLAND COMMUNITY PRESERVATION (CP) DISTRICT**
- **TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE BEAUFORT COUNTY ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ORDINANCE (ZDSO), APPENDIX D-- COMMUNITY PRESERVATION (CP) AREAS (ADDS INTERIM STANDARDS FOR THE NEWLY FORMED COOSAW ISLANDS CP DISTRICT)**

Mr. Hicks asked the audience how many had come regarding the Coosaw Island rezoning. The majority of those present, by their raised hands, indicated they were at the meeting for the Coosaw Island rezoning. He instructed the audience on the meeting process and asked that the public comment speakers keep their remarks to three minutes each.

Ms. Frazier briefed the Commission. She noted that several people contacted the Planning Department to discuss how Coosaw Island could be better preserved in the future. The people voiced their concerns regarding higher density on the island. The staff had the following options to assist the residents: 1- rezoning to resource conservation which was a density of 1 unit per 10 acres, 2- including Coosaw and Judge Islands into the Lady's Island Community Preservation District, or 3- forming a Coosaw-Judge Islands Community Preservation District. The third option was chosen where the rural and rural-residential standards became the Coosaw Island Community Preservation District. The staff recommended approval of the rezoning.

Commission discussion included a clarification on the Judge Island location and the Resource Conservation District designation, a clarification on the commercial stables use in the use table that may be a typo, a clarification on approval of the interim standards by the residents, the legality and makeup of the group representing the homeowners, a clarification on the name of the group with which the Planning staff met, and a clarification that the CP plan and standards will occur at a later date with the Planning staff working with the community.

Public Comment:

1. Mr. Isaiah Smalls, a Coosaw Island resident, said he represented the Sam's Point/Coosaw Community Association that contacted the Planning staff to discuss the future of Coosaw Island. Members of the Group were concerned that they would be in a reactive rather than a proactive mode each time development occurred in their area so they asked for the interim standards. When asked by the Commission if the Group was comfortable with the standards, Mr. Smalls said the Association still had to sit down together with the Planning staff to discuss how the interim standards would affect the island.

2. Ms. Laurie Hannah Jones, a Judge Island resident, is not opposed to the rezoning. However, she and several other residents were unaware of the request. All residents must be made aware of such action. She was surprised at the disorganization to date. She would like some time to study what is proposed.
3. Mr. Jim Collins, a Coosaw Island resident, noted that he had recently been hospitalized. He stated that everyone has been put on notice. He has attended five, including today's, meetings on this topic. The Group met with Councilman Paul Sommerville and the Planning Department. Mr. Collins hoped this issue would not take as long as a Milwaukee vs. Chicago issue that took 11 years until it was settled by the courts. He has not heard a single objection to the proposed standards. He noted there are internet websites with the information. His amazement is that there has not been any opposition.
4. Mr. David Bernthal noted that he and his wife were residents of Judge Island. His first indication of the rezoning was the sign on the Lucy Creek Bridge (that was posted by the Planning Department). He went on the County website and could not find anything about the proposal. There was no communication to the residents until the sign was put up. Without the definition of the proposed standards, he does not know to support it or not. The Judge Island residents appear not to have been included in this process.
5. Mr. Patrick Veath, a resident of Coosaw Island, asked how many had heard about the rezoning before seeing the sign. (A majority of hands were raised in the audience.) He stated that the residents should have been notified of the meetings.
6. Mr. Beekman Webb, a Coosaw Island resident, is in favor of the island staying the way it is. He is not aware of the details of the proposal; but, if it maintains what exists then he's in favor of it. He would like the island to remain rural.
7. Mr. Peter Brown was born and raised on Coosaw Island, and was a part of the bridge that was erected 40 years ago. He would like the island to stay the way it is.
8. Ms. Marjorie Lacey Cruze, a resident of Coosaw Island, noted that a lot of the residents know about, but do not attend, the meetings. She asked if the residents were shocked and nervous and did not know what was being proposed, or were they in support of retaining the island as it is. She is one of them that did not attend but had asked those who did attend what was discussed at the meetings. If the status quo is to be kept, she needs to get involved with the community. She says push forward with the proposal.
9. Mr. Robbie Holmquist, a resident of Coosaw Island, noted there had been a monthly meeting for three years. The community association was intended for the neighbors to get to know each other. He has put flyers in mailboxes to notify the neighbors. The community association is loosely run. He would like to see the proposed standards in writing. He mentioned an earlier meeting with Councilman Paul Sommerville at Coosaw Elementary that stated that the proposed rural policy would allow a considerable density increase on the island. If they wanted a higher density they would have moved to the Telfair subdivision.
10. Mr. Stan Lawson, a Coosaw Island resident, noted that he would love to see more attendees at the community meetings because their fundraisers are to assist their children going to college.
11. Mr. Dayle Marshall who lives on 15 Snapper Lane stated most of the land was clay and/or marsh. If the island builds out, the river would be contaminated. There have been rumors that the City of Beaufort would annex the island. The school bus is unable to get to his home because of the dirt road.

Further discussion by the Commission included the two-year process that took to formulate the Lady's Island Community Preservation District where some residents still were not notified of the changes, delaying the process so that the residents could meet to discuss the details of the proposed changes, clarifying the definitions of rural and community preservation districts, a concern for the uninformed residents of the proposed changes, and the rural definition that was adopted by County Council recently.

Motion: Mr. Petit made a motion, and Mr. Herd seconded the motion, **to delay actions on the Future Land Use Map Amendment, the Zoning Map Amendment, and the Text Amendment to the Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance regarding the proposed Coosaw Island Community Preservation District for thirty days or until such time that the residents of Coosaw and Judge Islands have reviewed and approved the proposed changes.** The motion was carried unanimously (FOR: Chmelik, Herd, Hicks, LeGree, Petit and Riley).

Note: Chairman Hicks recessed the meeting at approximately 6:43 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at approximately 6:55 p.m.

TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, CHAPTER 9, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (REPLACES IN-KIND)

Mr. Robert Merchant noted that there was one remaining element, Demographics, that is scheduled for the July 2009 Commission meeting. He commended the Lowcountry Economic Network for authoring the element, and Professor Don Shunk who authored some of the Appendices.

Ms. Kim Statler, the Executive Director of the Lowcountry Economic Network, commented that her organization has had a wonderful relationship with the County Planning Department. She thanked Ms. Angela Williams of the Network who wrote the body of work using Ms. Statler's notes. Ms. Statler, using a power point presentation, briefed the Commission on the element and its six recommendations.

Discussion included a clarification of workforce housing, the regional concept toward opportunities for prospective employers, a concern that the fast-track permitting will miss certain crucial steps, a kudos on the emphasis of education, a kudos to the outstanding work done by the Network, a recommendation to forward this element for the municipalities to use in their respective Comprehensive Plan, a suggestion for Ms. Statler to brief the Northern and Southern Regional Plan Implementation Committees with the element, and a suggestion to clarify that the Beaufort referenced in the element was Beaufort County.

Motion: Mr. Herd made a motion, and Ms. Chmelik seconded the motion, **to forward to County Council with a recommendation of approval on Chapter 9, Economic Development Element of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan that replaces-in-kind the former element.** The motion was carried unanimously (FOR: Chmelik, Herd, Hicks, LeGree, Petit and Riley).

Note: Mr. Petit was excused by Chairman Hicks to temporarily exit the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS – St. Helena Island Community Preservation Committee:

Ms. LeGree said that she was assigned to formulate a reconstituted St. Helena Island Community Preservation Committee that would review projects on St. Helena Island. The committee will consist of 12 members. Also there will be non-voting members—two advisory, one Council member, Ms. LeGree representing the Planning Commission and two substitutes. She discussed the selection process that included contacting the original committee members regarding their interest to remain on the committee, discussing the candidates with Councilman William McBride and the rationale for the committee make-up.

Mr. Hicks noted that the Commission must vote on the Committee membership as brought forth by Ms. LeGree. He indicated that Ms. Barbara Childs, in the Planning Department, would contact the members regarding the first Committee meeting. The Committee's first order of business is to elect officers; establish the Committee duties/rules, and to select a standing meeting date, time and location. The Committee will meet on an as-required basis. The Planning staff will notify the Committee of required meetings by contacting the Committee chairman.

Motion: Mr. Herd made the motion, and Mr. Riley seconded the motion, **to form the reconstituted St. Helena Island Community Preservation Committee with the 12-members that Ms. LeGree had brought before the Commission.** The motion was carried **unanimously** (FOR: Chmelik, Herd, Hicks, LeGree and Riley).

Note: Mr. Petit returned to the meeting prior to the adjournment motion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion: Mr. Herd made a motion, and Mr. Riley seconded the motion, **to adjourn** the Commission meeting. The motion was carried **unanimously** (FOR: Chmelik, Herd, Hicks, LeGree, Petit and Riley). The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:48 p.m.

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

Jim Hicks, Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman

APPROVED: June 1, 2009