



COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY  
**Beaufort County Community Development Department**

Beaufort County Government Robert Smalls Complex  
Physical: Administration Building, 100 Ribaut Road, Room 115  
Mailing: Post Office Drawer 1228, Beaufort, SC 29901-1228  
Phone: 843-255-2140 / FAX: 843-255-9432

The regular meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") was held on Monday, January 7, 2019, at the Bluffton Library, 120 Palmetto Way, Bluffton, South Carolina.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Robert Semmler, Chairman	Dr. Caroline Fermin	Ms. Cecily McMillan
Mr. Randolph Stewart, Vice Chairman	Ms. Diane Chmelik	Mr. Kevin Hennelly
Mr. Jason Hinchler	Mr. Ed Pappas	

**Member Absent:** Mr. Harold Mitchell

**Staff Present:**

Mr. Eric Greenway, Community Development Director  
Mr. Robert Merchant, Assistant Community Development Director  
Ms. Melissa Peagler, Long-range Planner  
Ms. Diane McMaster, Senior Administrative Specialist

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Robert Semmler called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mr. Semmler led those assembled at the library with the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Chairman Semmler made a motion to revise the Agenda to include, after review of the December 2018 meeting minutes, election of a new Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2019. Mr. Ed Pappas seconded the motion. The motion carried (**FOR: Semmler, Fermin, McMillan, Stewart, Chmelik, Hennelly, Hinchler, and Pappas; ABSENT: Mitchell**).

**REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES:** The Commissioners reviewed the December 3, 2018, minutes. **Motion:** Dr. Caroline Fermin made a motion to accept the minutes as written, and Ms. Diane Chmelik seconded the motion. The motion carried (**FOR: Semmler, Fermin, McMillan, Stewart, Chmelik, Hennelly, Hinchler, and Pappas; ABSENT: Mitchell**).

**ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2019:** Chairman Semmler asked for nominations for 2019 Chairman and Vice Chairman. Ms. Caroline Fermin nominated Mr. Robert Semmler for Chairman and Mr. Randolph Stewart for Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission for 2019, and Mr. Jason Hinchler seconded the nominations. There was unanimous agreement for both nominations.

Chairman Semmler noted for the record that Diane McMaster was appointed secretary for the 2019 Planning Commission.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Clemson is playing tonight at 8:00.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** Mr. Chuck Newton, Sea Island Coalition, expressed concern over tonight's meeting location due to a large number of Lady's Island citizens wanting to participate in discussion regarding the Lady's Island Plan 2018.

**NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:**

- NORTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY MAP AMENDMENT: T3 NEIGHBORHOOD TO T4 HAMLET CENTER OPEN (PARCELS R200 015 000 0310 0000, R200 015 000 0308 0000, R200 015 000 302A 0000). THE PROPERTIES ARE LOCATED AT 5, 7, AND 9 KATY CIRCLE ON LADY'S ISLAND; APPLICANT: THOMAS KOLEN

A copy of Mr. Kolen's handwritten note regarding the parcels in question was distributed to all Commission members. Mr. Kolen, nor his Agent representative, was present at the meeting. Ms. Melissa Peagler, Beaufort County Long range Planner, voiced staff concerns regarding increased traffic and the possibility of changing the personality of the neighborhood should the rezoning request be approved. Mr. Jason Hinchler made a motion to approve the rezoning request, and the Commission members present voted unanimously to reject the request.

It was reported that the Lady's Island Preservation Board reached a tie vote regarding the Katy Circle rezoning request which constitutes a denial.

Chairman Semmler requested a brief moment to introduce/specify district representation regarding the Planning Commission members present: Cecily McMillan – Northern Beaufort County St. Helena; Ed Pappas – Southern Region; Caroline Fermin – Port Royal; Randolph Stewart – South of the Broad Southern Region; Robert Semmler – St. Helena At Large; Diane Chmelik – Callawassie Island South of the Broad; Kevin Hennelly – Bluffton South of the Broad; Jason Hinchler – Lady's Island

- SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY MAP AMENDMENT / REZONING REQUEST FOR R600 040 000 0448 0000 (5.09 ACRES ON SOUTH SIDE OF STROUP LANE RD) APPROX 475 FEET EAST OF BURNT CHURCH RD FROM T3 HAMLET NEIGH TO T2-RURAL CENTER; APPLICANT: NANCY HOWES

Staff is recommending an area-wide rezoning vs spot zoning as the T2-Rural Center allows for a mixed use environment which would be a better fit overall. It was noted that Lost Hollow Business Park and Sabrina Square fall within the noted area, and all property owners have been notified regarding the pending rezoning request. Sabrina Associates LLC submitted a letter dated December 19, 2018, stating their support for Mr. Howes' request and requesting a T2-Rural Center rezoning for their property as well. Beaufort County staff notified the Town of Hilton Head and Town of Bluffton regarding this request and by letters dated January 4, 2019, the Town of Hilton Head Island and Town of Bluffton stated their general support for the area-wide rezoning approach with the Town of Hilton Head noting "concerns regarding dirt road access and the potential creation of non-conforming uses."

Residents of the area in question were present and voiced their support for the area-wide rezoning to T2-Rural Center. Those who spoke in favor of the rezoning follow: Ms. Nancy Howes, Mr. Charles Stewart, Mr. Drew Benningfield, Ms. Marty Goldson, Mr. Preston Miller, and Mr. Daniel Miller.

Mr. Eric Greenway, Beaufort County Community Development Director, explained that Beaufort County followed all State notification requirements/procedures years ago when some properties in the area being discussed were down zoned. He also noted that the Community Development Code works against a non-conforming use or grandfathered land use status. By making the requested change discussed today, the County cannot guarantee 100% non-conforming use compliance.

Mr. Robert Merchant, Beaufort County Community Development Deputy Director recommended sending the Stroup Lane rezoning request to County Council as an area-wide request, not one property. Mr. Kevin Hennelly made a motion to approve staff's area-wide rezoning recommendation, and Mr. Jason Hinchler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- **SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY MAP AMENDMENT / REZONING REQUEST FOR R600 032 000 0005 0000 (2.4 ACRES ON WEST SIDE OF TRIMBLESTON RD) FROM EXISTING PUD SAWMILL FOREST TO T2-R (RURAL); APPLICANT: STAFF**

The property was originally zoned PUD in error. Mr. Edward Durst, son of a property owner north of the property being addressed today, was present and in favor of the change. Ms. Diane Chmelik made a motion to approve the staff-generated request, and Dr. Caroline Fermin seconded the motion. There was unanimous support for the motion.

- **LADY'S ISLAND PLAN 2018** (Mr. Robert Merchant)

- **Why Plan For Lady's Island**

High visibility developments triggered widespread concern over a possible decline in the natural environment, growing traffic congestion and the effect on quality of life, inadequate infrastructure, a lack of organized management regarding future growth in general, a lack of development process transparency, and the nonexistence of a multi-jurisdictional plan. All factors warranted a large-scale plan and the Lady's Island Steering Committee, among others, were tasked with the intricate process. To date, there have been two (2) public meetings and two (2) online surveys in an attempt to reach out to all members of the community.

Members of the Lady's Island Steering Committee: Bob Semmler, Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman; Judy Alling, Metro Planning Commission Port Royal; Paul Butare, LIBPA; Carol Crutchfield, BCSD; Bill Harris, Metro Planning Commission; Caroline Fermin, Beaufort County Planning Commission; Chuck Newton, Sea Island Corridor Coalition; Allen Patterson, Lady's Island Preservation Committee; Kate Schaefer, Coastal Carolina League; James Watson, St. Helena representative; Eric Greenway, Beaufort County Community Development Director; Robert Merchant, Beaufort County Community Development Deputy Director; Libby Anderson, City of Beaufort Director of Planning; Lauren Kelly, City of Beaufort Project Development; Linda Bridges, Town of Port Royal; and Grey Dale, Consultant McBride, Dale, Clarion.

- **What Did We Learn**

There are no alternatives but managed growth in order to protect the natural resources and green infrastructure found in and around Lady's Island. A key component for success also requires an efficient road network. With population growth currently at 2.5% per year, there must be a coordinated effort for a detailed plan amongst Beaufort County, City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal.

- **Plan Recommendations**

1. Vision – a gateway to the sea islands
2. Goals and objectives – quality of place, nature preservation, connectivity
3. Growth boundaries – need for revisions to current boundaries to safeguard rural areas

4. Land use policies – review current policies to address and strengthen all neighborhoods, place restraints on development where sewer infrastructure not yet available, and regulate fill in areas of development
5. Transportation – improve public transportation and networking of roads, create a safer environment for pedestrian and bicycle traffic with more sidewalks, walkable centers, and bicycle lanes, postpone plans for a third bridge
6. Civic engagement – expanded role for Lady’s Island Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and improved public notice / education

• **Next Steps**

The Plan’s success requires a concerted effort on the parts of the Beaufort County Planning Commission and City of Beaufort MPC to adopt and forward to the Beaufort County Natural Resources Committee and Beaufort County Council to define the first steps by Resolution. We also need endorsements from the Town Of Port Royal, Lady’s Island Business Professionals Association (LIBPA), Sea Island Corridor Coalition, and South Carolina Coastal Conservation League. This concurrence at the governmental level will help to establish and implement strong leadership for the Plan.

Mr. Billy O’Neal, a Lady’s Island resident, spoke to those present. He pointed out that the overall concept is good. The problems lie in the details and specifically with the proposed traffic plan.

Dr. Tristan Greenwalt, Lady’s Island Dental, spoke to those present. He is in favor of the Plan in general but has concerns regarding changes to existing traffic patterns and those effects on privately-owned property/road and restricted median access near Lady’s Island Middle School which could impact his business in a negative manner.

Ms. Jean Sulc, a resident of St. Helena Island and Secretary of the Beaufort Aviation Association, spoke to those present. She asked that her presentation be part of the meeting’s official record:

1. County Council should retain the option of extending the Beaufort County Airport Runway.
2. Do not approve a policy or wording, currently in the Lady’s Island Plan, committing County and Beaufort City Council to, “never consider the implementation of the County’s Airports Master Plan of 2011.”
3. Include substitute language: “. . . this Lady’s Island Plan 2018 recommends that any runway extension, of any distance, be evaluated by aviation professionals and economists and be decided by elected Beaufort County and Beaufort City officials in consideration of an extension’s environmental impacts of noise, increased traffic, and economic benefits.”

Mr. Robert Reams, a Lady’s Island resident, is not in favor of rerouting traffic onto Williams Street.

Ms. Carol Ruff, Lady’s Island attorney, lives on Sunset Blvd. Ms. Ruff has strong concerns regarding the proposed changes to current traffic patterns at her home address and restricted medians at Lady’s Island Professional Village.

Mr. Jim Thomas, Tidewatch Owners’ Association, requested that a median restricting access to existing businesses at his complex and changes to current traffic patterns be reconsidered. Business owners must have a voice in this planning process.

Mr. Robert Hendricks spoke to those present. He endorses the concept of the Plan and feels it would be a mistake to advocate the role of moving forward with the Plan to a volunteer group. Mr. Hendricks also reminded everyone that details cannot be achieved at the very beginning of a complex project like this one.

Ms. Candace Thomas expressed concern that a proposed median would block both entrances to the business complex owned by her husband.

Dr. Angela Greenwalt, Lady's Island Dental, expressed concern regarding a proposed median blocking the entrance to her dental practice and the negative impact on medical emergencies where the public could not reach her office in a timely manner.

Mr. Chuck Newton, Sea Island Corridor Coalition, addressed those present and pointed out that we are currently working with a conceptual framework where many DOT hearings will occur prior to any finalized decisions. He is in favor of adopting the Plan and stated there was much more work to be done.


Chairman Semmler asked for a motion adopting the Lady's Island Plan 2018. Mr. Jason Hincer made a motion, and Ms. Cecily McMillan seconded the motion, to adopt the Plan and move it through the process to Beaufort County Council. Mr. Kevin Hennelly requested the motion be approved under the condition that the Planning Commission continue to add suggestions/feedback to the existing Plan. There was unanimous agreement from the Commission members present.

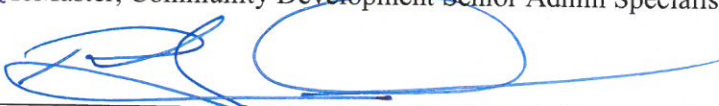
Mr. Ed Pappas encouraged transparency from all groups who participate in the planning process and commented that civic engagement is necessary for the Plan to continue moving forward.

**Other Business:** The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be Monday, February 4, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Semmler made a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. The motion carried (**FOR: Semmler, Fermin, McMillan, Stewart, Chmelik, Hennelly, Hincer, Pappas; ABSENT: Mitchell**).

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane McMaster, Community Development Senior Admin Specialist

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Semmler, Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman

**APPROVED:**

**March 4, 2019**

*Note: The video link of the February 5, 2018, Planning Commission meeting is:*  
[http://beaufort.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=3&clip\\_id=3628](http://beaufort.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=3628)