



COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY
Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department
Beaufort County Government Robert Smalls Complex
Physical: Administration Building, Room 115 100 Ribaut Road
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 in Council Chambers on Monday, June 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Ed Pappas, Chairman
Mr. Randolph Stewart, Vice Chairman
Dr. Caroline Fermin
Ms. Gail Murray
Mr. Kevin Hennelly
Ms. Cecily McMillan
Mr. Dan Riedel
Mr. Armin Wahl

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Frank Ducey

STAFF PRESENT:

Mr. Eric Greenway, County Administrator
Mr. Chuck Atkinson, Assistant County Administrator, Development/Recreation
Mr. Mark Davis, Planning and Zoning Deputy Director
Ms. Juliana Smith, Long Range Planner
Ms. Chris DiJulio-Cook, Senior Administrative Specialist

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

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

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES: A motion was made to approve the April 4, 2022 minutes. Dr. Caroline Fermin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA REVIEW: Mr. Pappas asked if there were any comments or additions to the agenda. There were none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Chairman Pappas asked if there were any non-agenda citizen comments. There were none.

ACTION ITEMS:

TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE (CDC): SECTION 4.1.330 (ECOTOURISM) TO CLARIFY GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISH BASE SITE AREA CALCULATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT.

Ms. Juliana Smith explained that, after the April 4th meeting, the Staff revisited some of the proposed changes and made adjustments based on the Commissioners’ feedback. She reviewed the updated changes, including suggestions made by the County’s legal team. Mr. Armin Wahl motioned to approve

the changes, including those not included in the original packet, Mr. Daniel Riedel seconded the motion. The motion received unanimous support.

Ms. Jessie White, of the Coastal Conservation League, gave her endorsement of the changes but asked to have wastewater addressed as part of the changes.

Ms. Smith offered a suggestion where the change, to consider wastewater management, could be made.

Dr. Fermin made a motion to amend the original vote to accept the addition regarding wastewater. Ms. Cecily McMillan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT/REZONING REQUEST FOR 94.47 ACRES (R600 008 000 0016 0000 AND R600 008 000 0001 0000) KNOWN AS THE COOLER TRACT LOCATED ACROSS THE INTERSECTION OF OKATIE HIGHWAY (SC 170) AND LOWCOUNTRY DRIVE (SC 462) FROM T2 RURAL TO C3 NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED USE AND C5 REGIONAL CENTER MIXED USE DISTRICTS.

Mr. Mark Davis explained the requested zoning change and the Staff's recommendation that the request be denied.

Mr. Josh Tiller, JK Tiller Associates, Inc., representing the property owners, stated they were willing to separate the rezoning request from the development agreement included with the original application.

After much discussion, Chairman Pappas opened the meeting up to public comment.

Ms. Jessie White spoke against the rezoning.

Mr. Bruce Duncan chose not to make a public address.

Mr. Neal Pugliese spoke against the rezoning

Mr. Mark Rovnak, President of the Board of Oldfield Club, spoke against the rezoning

Mr. Wally Swanson spoke against the rezoning

Ms. Diane Schwerin chose not to comment

Ms. Mary-Jo Kilcher spoke against the rezoning

Ms. Nancy Gorr passed on her opportunity to speak publicly

Mrs. Donna Dobrzynski spoke against the rezoning

Ms. LouAnn Kelly chose not to comment

Ms. Sue Smilari passed on commenting publicly

Mr. Joe Cooler spoke on behalf of the rezoning, stating he and his brothers want to be treated fairly and be able to develop the property that's been in their family for 130 plus years.

Mr. Hennelly, Mr. Wahl, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Pappas all made further comments regarding their concerns with the proposed rezoning.

Chairman Pappas asked for a motion. Mr. Hennelly made a motion to deny the proposal for the property to be rezoned from T2R to C3NMU and C5RCMU. Dr. Caroline Fermin seconded the motion. The motion to deny the rezoning passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Pappas stated he did not have a report but wanted to remind everyone that the next meeting, July 7th, would fall on a Thursday night instead of a Monday.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Pappas, with no further business to discuss, adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY: Chris DiJulio-Cook
Planning & Zoning Senior Administrative Specialist



Ed Pappas
Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman

Date: 9/8/22



June 3, 2022

Robert Merchant
Community Development Deputy Director
Beaufort County Community Development Department
P.O. Drawer 1228
Beaufort, SC 29901-1228
RE: Zoning Map Text Amendment

Mr. Merchant,

The Beaufort County School District been made aware of the zoning change request made by Cooler's Corner LLC for the property located at the corner of Hwy 170 and Hwy 462 and west of the Oldfield PUD. We have also been provided a copy of the "Zoning Map or Text Amendment / PUD Master Plan Change Application dated March 2021 (Rev) which includes a Preliminary Traffic Summary dated December 20, 2019.

There are several concerns that the school district has related to the rezoning of this property:

1. The District does not have excess capacity to address the potential increase in the number of students that this neighborhood could generate with 170 residential units shown in the application. With the students anticipated with the nearby Malind Bluff neighborhood (Osprey Point PUD) and River Oaks PUD adjacent to Okatie Elementary we anticipate enrollment to exceed capacity. The school is currently functioning at 85% capacity. This development would also attend May River High school, with 91% capacity usage even with the recent opening of a 22-classroom wing as part of the 2019 Referendum. We anticipate May River to be over 100% capacity usage by 2023-2024 school year.
2. Both Malind Bluff and River Oaks PUDs were approved with school impact fees that would help generate funds for additional classrooms. As of this date, the school district has seen nothing to indicate that this development would have similar fees for approval. We propose that the county incorporate that discussion into this approval process. But we have also been recently made aware that the development agreement for the River Oaks PUD was allowed to expire, potentially affecting that school impact fee agreement and potentially generating even less funds for future school capacity expansions.

We respectfully request that this zoning change for the residential portion of the request be postponed until discussions can be had with the developer on school impact fees as part of the development agreement. Beaufort County School District staff would be more than welcome to discuss with the developer our concerns about this project. To date we have had no contact or inquiries.

Robert S. Oetting, PE
Chief Operations Officer
Beaufort County School District

cc: Dr. Frank Rodriguez, Superintendent BCSD
Carol Crutchfield, Planning Coordinator BCSD



6/6/22

Dear Beaufort County Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on behalf of the Coastal Conservation League regarding: 1) text amendments to the Community Development Code (CDC) for ecotourism, and 2) a rezoning request for the Cooler Tract from T2 Rural to C5 Regional Center (C5) and C3 Neighborhood Mixed Use (C3NMU).

First, we fully support staff's recommended changes to clarify and further refine the CDC's requirements for ecotourism uses. The changes are in line with the intent of the ecotourism use and provide greater specificity for staff to rely on in evaluating proposals. In addition, we'd suggest that operational plans should also be required to detail how wastewater generated on site will be managed.

Second, we respectfully ask the commission to deny the rezoning of the Cooler Tract. The request would amount to a significant increase in density from the 32 dwelling units permitted under existing zoning to nearly 580 potential new dwelling units plus commercial. As laid out in the staff report, this request runs in direct conflict with Beaufort County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. It also undermines the well-reasoned design standards and natural resource protections afforded under the CDC.

The Cooler Tract is located on a regional corridor that is already experiencing substantial growing pains and traffic issues. Indeed, the site straddles an already inefficiently functioning intersection at Highways 170 and 462, which has been identified as a priority study area for the Lowcountry Council of Governments long-range regional transportation planning. It is irresponsible to introduce hundreds of more vehicles and daily trips at this location without the proper infrastructure in place to support it.

Over the past several weeks, Beaufort-Jasper (BJSWA) has been pleading with residents to cooperate in reducing their water uses, particularly for irrigation, and just this weekend issued a temporary water restriction specifically for Okatie due to a surge causing power outages. This is just on the heels of the Authority reporting a new peak for usage on May 18 when customers used 34.9 million gallons of water at a rate faster than the system's ability to treat it.

The Okatie/170 Corridor is losing rural lands and natural resources at break-neck speed. The Cooler Tract is among multiple other rezoning requests for projects in this area, some of which are before Jasper County this evening as well. We cannot keep adding more homes without ensuring that our utilities can provide for basic needs, that our roadways are safe and accessible for all users, and that the unique environment that defines our region and makes it such a desirable place to live, work, and play will remain for future generations.

Planning staff has laid out in great detail how the Cooler rezoning runs afoul of governing growth management plans and policies. We urge you to deny this rezoning request so that the applicant can work with staff to pursue alternatives that are better aligned with the future vision for this regionally significant corridor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jessie White
South Coast Office Director
843.522.1800 | jessiew@sccl.org