



COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY
Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department
Beaufort County Government Robert Smalls Complex
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The regular meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") was held at the Beaufort County Council Chambers on Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Ed Pappas, Chairman
Mr. Jon Henney
Ms. Cecily McMillan, Vice Chair
Mr. Gene Meyers
Mr. Glenn Miller
Ms. Gail Murray
Mr. Chuck Newton
Mr. Dennis Ross

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Pete Cook

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Kristen Forbus, Long Range Planner
Mr. Robert Merchant, Planning Director

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

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

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES: The July 9th minutes were approved with no objections with the condition that a scrivener's error on page 1 was addressed.

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

ACTION ITEMS:

CONSIDERATION OF A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE (CDC): TABLE A.13.40 (MAY RIVER COMMUNITY PRESERVATION DISTRICT LAND USE) TO PERMIT CEMETERIES AS AN ALLOWED USE

Ms. Forbus presented the text amendment and staff's recommendation of approval. Ms. McMillan asked about height requirements for structures located on cemeteries. Mr. Merchant stated that the structures would have to follow building code requirements. Ms. McMillan asked about the applicant's plans. Mr. Merchant stated that a text amendment would be applicable to the whole zoning district rather than just one site. The applicant, John Binder, spoke of the plans and discussions with the Department of Veterans Affairs. He stated the VA was interested in a parcel that is located east of Buckwalter and west of Buck Island Rd. Mr. Pappas asked about a timeframe. Mr. Binder stated the closing timeframe would be between 6 months to a year.

Ms. McMillan asked about access points. Mr. Binder said there would be at least two. Mr. Henney asked about development standards and negative impacts. Mr. Merchant stated that the CDC has code standards that address issues such as lighting and buffers. He stated the impact of cemeteries is low and extra

conditional standards was not necessary to add to the use. Additionally, anything of a large size comparable to the National Cemetery would need to go through the development review process. Mr. Newton asked if a conditional use would provide additional protections and if it was necessary for this use. Mr. Merchant stated that staff saw this as a low-impact use; therefore, conditions were not part of the recommendation. Conversation opened about whether the use should be permitted, conditional, or special. Mr. Merchant reiterated that the use is a permitted use in almost every other district under "Place of Worship". He stated these uses were not originally adopted in the MRCP. This may have been done in an effort to preserve the rural character of the area. However, this proposed use is consistent with rural character. Mr. Merchant said that anything out of the ordinary would be addressed at the staff level- including a potential need for a Traffic Impact Analysis.

Chair Pappas opened the meeting for public comment.
There was no public comment.

Mr. Henney made a motion to recommend approval of CONSIDERATION OF A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE (CDC): TABLE A.13.40 (MAY RIVER COMMUNITY PRESERVATION DISTRICT LAND USE) TO PERMIT CEMETERIES AS AN ALLOWED USE stating that the amendment met standards 1-7. Mr. Miller seconded. The motion passed 8-0.

CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE FOCUSED PLANNING AREAS CHAPTER OF THE 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO CHANGE THE RURAL CROSSROADS PLACE TYPE LOCATED ON SEABROOK ROAD AND THE SPANISH MOSS TRAIL TO A HAMLET PLACE TYPE

Mr. Merchant presented the background of Place Type Overlays and what they are. He stated the applicant is proposing a Comprehensive Plan amendment to change the Seabrook Place Type from Rural Crossroads to a Hamlet to accommodate 160 acres. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use's goal is to show future land use and density. Mr. Merchant stated the Rural Crossroads Place Type was originally chosen because it corresponds with the old Seabrook community. This type of PTO accommodates one dwelling unit per acre at maximum of 80 acres; a Hamlet's maximum density is three units per acre at a maximum of 160 acres. Mr. Merchant went over the criteria in the staff report reiterating that the area is in proximity to three schools and the Spanish Moss Trail. He also emphasized that the underlying Future Land Use of Neighborhood Mixed-Use visions the area to be denser than Rural. The Neighborhood Mixed Use calls for development of two units per acre. The current Rural Crossroads Place Type conflicts with this at a lower density and is counterintuitive.

Chair Pappas asked about the agreement with the City of Beaufort and annexation. Mr. Merchant stated that is discussed in the next agenda item. Mr. Henney asked why the Place Type was not originally adopted as a Hamlet. Mr. Merchant stated it was because the current character of the area is rural and most likely, historically, used to qualify as a Rural Crossroads. There was discussion on implementation of contiguous Place Types and the zoning districts of the application. Mr. Ross spoke about the chosen zoning districts and impact on the rural heritage of the area. Mr. Merchant reiterated that the purpose of a Place Type is to incentivize dense walkable communities by providing a higher density than the underlying zoning. Mr. Newton clarified that density was for gross land space. Ms. McMillan opened up conversation regarding density and sewer.

Chair Pappas opened the meeting for public comment.
Felice Lamarca spoke in favor of low-density development and the Comprehensive Plan.

CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING MAP FOR 233 ACRES LOCATED AT 214 SEABROOK RD FROM T2 RURAL TO HAMLET PLACE TYPE OVERLAY (T3 HAMLET NEIGHBORHOOD AND T4 HAMLET CENTER) AND INDUSTRIAL (S1)

Mr. Merchant presented the zoning amendments and Place Type plan. He discussed the history of the property stating that a portion has an easement that was purchased in 2008 through Rural and Critical Lands program and the Air Station to protect from development in the AICUZ. He then discussed the restrictions of annexation in the conservation easement. It states that any annexation required County Council approval first. The growth boundary and Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan agreement of annexation and contiguity were discussed. It was stated that the city, however, does not want to annex the site.

Mr. Merchant presented the site's facilities saying that a Traffic Impact Analysis was completed. Water/sewer will need improvements but will allow for more connections to nearby residences. The proposed EMS/fire site is called out in the Burton Fire District's long-range plans. The nearby schools have excess capacity. It was stated that the S1 (industrial) zoning district is compatible with the AICUZ and that the proposed residential development is set outside of the AICUZ. Mr. Merchant stated there were some site plan concerns staff put together in the report. He then went over the criteria and recommendation for the rezoning stating that the rezoning was contingent upon the Comprehensive Plan amendment being passed.

Mr. Ross stated there were discrepancies with the TIA. He spoke about concerns of walkability and the cost to build a new EMS/Fire station. There were also concerns of a Development Agreement and the lack of public meetings during the process. Mr. Newton and Mr. Merchant discussed density and layout of the project. Mr. Miller expressed concern about the conditions attached to the staff's recommendation and lack of time to review the project. Mr. Merchant stated that the commission had the right to defer the request. Ms. McMillan asked about affordable housing. Mr. Merchant stated it was not required but often something discussed in a Development Agreement. There was then discussion about the size of the proposed development compared to other developments in the County. Mr. Henney asked about the weight the regulating plan has. Mr. Merchant stated that it, along with a thoroughfare plan, and civic/open space plan are required and any changes would have to go through the same process. Mr. Ross stated there were inadequacies in the application. Ryan Thompson, representing the applicant, presented the Comprehensive Plan and rezoning amendment application.

Mr. Ross stated concerns about stormwater. Mr. Thompson stated that they will abide by requirements and use pond systems and drainage. Mr. Miller asked about the renderings for the S1 portion of the property. Mr. Thompson said there were no plans as of yet. It was stated that S1 was part of phase 3 and would begin construction in 10 years. Mr. Thompson said that the EMS land would be given over automatically. Doug Nicoll, the applicant, said the industrial parcels would house flex space/offices. He discussed the price points and diversity of housing types. He also stated there were opportunities for water stub outs and that there would be four acres donated to accommodate a recreation center and .7 miles of Spanish Moss trail would be implemented. Walter Nester, representing the applicant, discussed the process of implementing a Development Agreement and public hearings.

Chair Pappas opened the meeting for public comment.

Frank Emminger spoke against the proposed amendment with concerns of the traffic impact analysis.

Mark Heygood spoke against the proposed amendment with concerns of building and timeframe.

Melissa Avery spoke of concerns with the proposed amendment.

Wendy Orford spoke against the proposed amendment with concerns of impacts.

Chip McLeod spoke in favor of the proposed amendment.

William West spoke in favor of the proposed amendment.

Kathleen Gardner spoke as a representative of Sharon DeLoach against the proposed amendment.

Heather Spade spoke against the proposed amendment with concerns of cultural impacts.

Billy Keyserling spoke in favor of the proposed amendment and stated that he would develop 20 acres nearby to accommodate shops and a grocery store.

The Board also received the following comments:

From: [Cynthia Cooler](#)
To: [Forbus, Kristen](#)
Cc: [Merchant, Robert](#); [Austin, Hillary](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT: Opposition to 214 Seabrook Road Rezoning Amendment
Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2026 7:02:31 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Please report any suspicious attachments, links, or requests for sensitive information to the Beaufort County IT Division at 843-255-2000.

Date: August 25, 2026

To: Beaufort County Planning Commission & Staff

From: Cynthia Cooler
88 Detour Road
Seabrook, SC 29940

RE: Public Comment in Opposition to the Proposed Amendment to the Zoning Map for 233 Acres at 214 Seabrook Road (From T2 Rural to T3HN, T4HC, and SI)

Dear Members of the Planning Commission and County Council,

I am writing to formally log my strong opposition to the proposed rezoning of the 233 acres located at 214 Seabrook Road. As the property owner at 88 Detour Road, my home and quality of life will be directly and negatively impacted by this massive shift from a quiet rural community to high-density commercial and industrial zones. I completely oppose this amendment for the following critical reasons:

Severe Traffic Impact on Detour Road:

The proposed plan shows new streets feeding directly into Detour Road from the highly dense T4 Hamlet Center (T4HC). Detour Road is a residential and school-adjacent roadway that is entirely unequipped to handle the heavy daily traffic, delivery trucks, and congestion that a retail and mixed-use center will bring.

Incompatible Industrial Zoning (SI):

Placing Industrial (SI) zones immediately adjacent to Detour Road and Chisholm Road is highly disruptive. Introducing warehouses, light manufacturing, or distribution yards directly into our neighborhood will cause severe visual blight, environmental degradation, and commercial vehicle noise right next to our homes and nearby schools.

Compounded Noise and Safety Concerns:

Detour Road already sits within the F-35 AICUZ 65 dB Noise Level Contour. Adding heavy industrial operations and dense commercial activity to an area already burdened by military flight-path noise will make the neighborhood unlivable and degrade our property values.

Destruction of Rural Character:

The transition from T2 Rural to dense T4 Hamlet Center and Industrial zoning destroys the historic character of Seabrook. This massive urban-style development does not belong in an area that residents intentionally chose for its rural peace.

For these reasons, I request that the Planning Commission and County Council deny this

rezoning request and preserve the current T2 Rural designation.

Please include this letter in the official public record for the upcoming hearing on September 10th, 2026. I plan to attend the meeting to stand in person with my neighbors in unified opposition to this proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the residents who will bear the brunt of this development.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Cooler
88 Detour Road
Seabrook, SC
843-271-5266
cynthiacooler4@gmail.com

PLEASE INCLUDE THIS IN THE RECORD

Beaufort County Planning Commission.
September 10, 2026

John Smith

DAVE LAND LLC

The County's burden to justify abandoning its own Rural Zoning.

Good evening. I live in Seabrook, and I am here to tell you to abide by county regulations and leave Rural land rural.

If Rural zoning can be discarded whenever a developer proposes enough houses, what protection does the word "RURAL" actually provide?

This is not simply a request to build some houses. It is a request to change the rules governing this land so that hundreds of houses can be built where hundreds of houses are not presently permitted.

That distinction matters.

Beaufort County's own Zoning Code says the purpose of Rural Zoning is to **preserve the rural character of Beaufort County.**

Those are the County's words, not mine.

So, I have a very simple question.

What has changed about this land that makes it no longer worthy of being rural?

Has the countryside disappeared?

Have the woods disappeared?

Has Seabrook suddenly become an urban center?

Or has the only thing that changed been that a developer discovered that considerably more money can be made if Beaufort County changes its zoning?

We are hearing that this project will provide affordable housing for teachers.

Fine. Then show us.

Show us the proposed selling prices. Show us the legally enforceable affordability requirements. Show us how many homes will actually be reserved for teachers or other working families --- and for how many years?

A sales pitch is not an affordable housing program.

Before approving hundreds of houses, the public should also see the complete site plan, traffic study, drainage and stormwater analysis, water and sewer requirements, environmental impacts, school impacts, and the actual density being requested.

Once Rural land is rezoned for high density development, we don't get the countryside back.

And while the developer can come back with more paperwork, Seabrook citizens cannot come back later and recreate what has been destroyed.

Follow the purpose of your own Rural Zoning Ordinance.

Keep Seabrook rural, Deny this rezoning request. Thank you.

John Smith
A Seabrook Citizen.

Mr. Henney stated that the Place Type should be a higher density than the Future Land Use. PTOs are not a one-size-fits-all and that maxing out at the highest density and densest allowed districts does not reflect best practices.

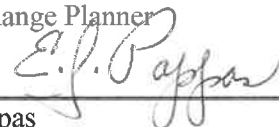
Mr. Meyers suggested a deferral until different plans are ready to be presented. The applicant agreed.

Mr. Meyers made a motion to defer CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE FOCUSED PLANNING AREAS CHAPTER OF THE 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO CHANGE THE RURAL CROSSROADS PLACE TYPE LOCATED ON SEABROOK ROAD AND THE SPANISH MOSS TRAIL TO A HAMLET PLACE TYPE to the next meeting to address comments. Mr. Newton seconded. The motion passed 6-2.

Mr. Meyers made a motion to defer CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING MAP FOR 233 ACRES LOCATED AT 214 SEABROOK RD FROM T2 RURAL TO HAMLET PLACE TYPE OVERLAY (T3 HAMLET NEIGHBORHOOD AND T4 HAMLET CENTER) AND INDUSTRIAL (S1) to the next meeting to address comments. Mr. Newton seconded. The motion passed 6-2.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Pappas adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY: Kristen Forbus
Long Range Planner

 10/5/26

Ed Pappas
Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman