

**Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Committee Meeting
Executive Conference Room, County Administration Building
100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC 29902
January 22, 2016**

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Robert Semmler, Chairman, Northern Regional Plan Implementation (NRPIC) Committee and Beaufort County Planning Commission; Vernon DeLoach, Town of Port Royal Councilman; Brian Flewelling, Beaufort County Councilman District 5; Alice Howard, Beaufort County Councilwoman District 4; Billy Keyserling, City of Beaufort Mayor; Mike McFee, City of Beaufort Councilman/Mayor Pro-Tem; and Samuel Murray, Mayor of Town of Port Royal.

Members Absent: Jerry Cook, Town of Yemassee Mayor; Mary Cordray, Beaufort County School Board Chairman; Gerald Dawson, Beaufort County Councilman District 1; Joe DeVito, Vice-Chairman, Northern Regional Plan Implementation (NRPIC) Committee Metropolitan Planning Commission Chair; and William McBride, Lowcountry Council of Governments.

Staff Present: Libby Anderson, City of Beaufort Planning Director; Anthony Criscitiello, Beaufort County Planning Director; Colin Kinton, Transportation Engineering Director; Eric Larson, Environmental Engineering Director; Ginnie Kozak, Lowcountry Council of Governments; Robert Merchant, Beaufort County Long-Range Planner; and Barbara Childs, Beaufort County Administrative Assistant to the Planning Director.

Other Attendees: Reed Armstrong, Coastal Conservation League; Hoby Dare (sp?), Distant Island; Jim Hicks, Lady's Island resident; John Holden, Lost Island Resident; Jason Mann, U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort; and Paul Sommerville, Beaufort County Council Chairman.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Robert Semmler called the Northern Regional Plan Implementation Committee (NRPIC) meeting to order at approximately 9:40 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mr. Semmler led those assembled with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

- **Agenda Items:** Mr. Semmler noted the three agenda items to be discussed.
- **Tree Ordinance:** Mr. Semmler noted that during his meeting with Ms. Eliza Hill of the City of Beaufort he was given some tree information. He noted the Oyster Bluff oak tree removals. County Council is looking into tightening their tree ordinance. The City of Beaufort is making adjustments that will be loosened in the urban areas and tighten in the suburban areas. The Town of Port Royal will look at their ordinance to see what can be done. County Councilman Brian Flewelling noted that a residential development was different from economic development. County Councilwoman Alice Howard noted that complaints were received and Mr. Anthony Criscitiello, County Planning Director, noted that his staff was looking into the Oyster Bluff situation. County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville noted that Oyster Bluff was part of the growth boundary. Trees in the growth

boundaries had not been looked into; however, trees in rural areas were considered. He thought this committee should look at trees in the growth boundaries. He noted that timbering property was allowed, however not clear cutting. There is a two-year wait before development can occur on clearcutted properties. Mr. Criscitiello suggested a 5-year requirement versus 2 years. He noted that under state law timbering is allowed. Each county can modify the law as to when development can occur. He explained development versus silviculture, and the development process. The 2-year limit is supposed to be a deterrent of clearcutting to develop, then replanting during development. Mr. Semmler wanted this Committee to discuss this with all the government entities involved. Mr. Sommerville noted that generally the small builders are respectful of preserving the existing trees. Tract builders have a tendency to clearcut the property. Councilman Flewelling noted that the original developer, Mr. Bennett McNeal, has an established record of preserving trees. Mr. Semmler also gave kudos to Mr. McNeal's record. The issue should be addressed.

LADY'S ISLAND COMMUNITY PRESERVATION (LICP) COMMITTEE

Mr. Semmler noted that he and County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville sat in at the Lady's Island CP meeting.

Mr. Jim Hicks, the LICP Committee Chairman, noted that two Mondays ago, the LICP Committee convened a meeting with the City and County Planners regarding the proposed WalMart on Lady's Island. He noted that:

- the intersection of Lady's Island Drive, Sam's Point Road, and Sea Island Parkway is identified by Mr. Colin Kinton, the County Transportation Engineering Director, as failing when WalMart opens because of the proposed Harris Tetter being built at the intersection of Sam's Point Road and Sea Island Parkway; and by putting Harris Tetter up to the road, the design precludes any secondary road from forming in the future;
- the bypass concept is not viable since it is too costly; and
- the Sea Island Parkway widening occurred up until the Lady's Island airport since St. Helena asked not to be widened to 4 lanes.

Mr. Hicks gave the history of the annexation of the airport industrial property and the proposed WalMart. He also noted another property that was annexed into the City of Beaufort for a Taco Bell. Chowan Creek is the boundary of the City of Beaufort's growth boundary, and it is rural. Will there be upzoning all the way to Chowan Creek? He noted the satellite businesses that would locate near a WalMart. He spoke of the County's Rural Business District zoning under the former Zoning ordinance. The current traffic count is 17,000, with 23,000 as the breaking point. Mr. Hicks asked if the municipalities can pause (perhaps using a development moratorium) to discuss development along Sea Island Parkway until the traffic issue is resolved. He asked for recommendations from the Planners. He urged them to look at the area from the proposed WalMart to Chowan Creek to insure that development does not stress the current traffic situation.

Note: Mr. Colin Kinton, County Transportation Engineering Director, entered the meeting at 10:12 a.m. City of Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling entered the meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Discussion included procedurally allowing the NRPIC chairman to ask the planners to consider Mr. Hicks' recommendations, the five-lane section of the road in the area causing hesitation on a development moratorium, looking at a bypass at the intersection instead of a moratorium, and having a frontage road behind rather than in front of buildings.

Mr. Semmler brought Mayor Keyserling up to date on what had been discussed. Mayor Keyserling noted that the annexation of the Taco Bell property had transportation considerations because of the proposed Walmart. He noted the City's process to address the traffic dilemma. Mr. Criscitiello noted that the City and County planners met yesterday afternoon to come up with a recommendation. Mr. Semmler asked that the Committee be kept in the loop and he thanked Ms. Libby Anderson and Mr. Criscitiello for working together on the issue. City of Beaufort Councilman Mike McFee noted that the City of Beaufort inherited the PUD and its constraints from the County (when the City annexed the proposed Walmart property) and having the traffic information and how it affects the proposed Walmart and Harris Tetter is helpful.

Public Comment: Mr. John Holden, a Lost Island resident, submitted a letter to the City of Beaufort regarding the Taco Bell annexation/rezoning issue. Four major concerns were brought forth, including the increased traffic hindering safe ingress/egress from Lost Island Road and environmental concerns of the Taco Bell. As advised by Mayor Keyserling, Mr. Holden contacted and received responses from Senator Tom Davis and Representative Shannon Erickson regarding his concerns. *(Mr. Semmler noted safety issues during his drive along Sea Island Parkway where the lanes merge and drivers using the median lane to pass other vehicles. He also noted the schools, more houses, more traffic, and more school buses along Sea Island Parkway.)*

RURAL AND CRITICAL LAND PRESERVATION (RCLP) PROGRAM

Mr. Criscitiello noted that there was a bid opening for the Crystal Lake Park. The butler building will be occupied by the South Carolina Soil Conservation Service, the Beaufort County Open Land Trust, and the Friends of Crystal Lake. The building will be repurposed for the tenants. He showed the site plan for the development of the park. A tower or a pavilion will be built, based on County Council's decision. Solar panels are proposed for the building to drive down the cost of operations. The bid opening is January 29th. He noted the work of the Friends of Crystal Lake and of Fort Fremont. He also noted the public-private partnership concept adopted by County Council. He further noted the Okatie Park and coordination with the Town of Bluffton regarding that park development.

JOINT LAND USE STUDY (JLUS)

Ms. Ginnie Kozak of the Lowcountry Council of Government (LCOG) noted that this Committee and LCOG have been doing JLUS work since 2001. The revised JLUS was completed on March 2015. She noted that the Office of Economic Adjustment of the Department of Defense asked her to apply for more money to implement the JLUS. She put together a scope of work for the consultants to perform the outreach work and received a number of inquiries but only one proposal from Mr. Tyson Smith. She noted the County and municipalities should amend their overlays to include the new JLUS. Mr. Smith will begin immediately. Councilman Flewelling anticipated the County adoption process of the overlays

near the April-May period; however, since Mr. Smith will be doing community outreach, the County will defer until after receiving a schedule of the community outreach from Mr. Smith. Ms. Kozak noted that LCOG would work together with County Council for joint community outreach.

Ms. Kozak noted that the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) administrative process should begin also. State grant money received six and one-half years ago is still waiting to be used. An RFP was released and one proposal was received by White & Smith (Tyson Smith).

LCOG also is looking at sea level rise. They are working on mapping and conceptualizing—looking at the infrastructure and how the sea level rise will impact the military facilities, especially from the Marine Corps Air Station to Garden's Corner. The Air Station is on highest ground in Beaufort County. Ms. Kozak will keep this Committee informed on the progress of each item.

Mr. Semmler noted that the implementation of the second JLUS should be released/announced to the public on the LCOG's website. Mayor Keyserling noted that the City has a Task Force on sea level rise. Ms. Kozak noted that she had been talking to Mr. Chris Marsh and Councilwoman Alice Howard. The City of Beaufort has been selected for grant money. Ms. Kozak noted that we are all working together.

Mr. Jason Mann of the Marine Corps Air Station thanked all for working together to implement the JLUS. Mayor Keyserling asked about the 50 acres that abuts the Industrial Park. Mr. Mann does not know any detail except the Department of Defense has been conversing with the property owners.

REPORT: Status of Spanish Moss Trail: Mr. Robert Merchant noted that the Depot Road to Parris Island Gateway portion is wrapping up. A portion is delayed because of inclement weather. The other section of the trail, the Kennedy Family has offered a challenge grant for the Roseida Road to Clarendon Road. There is a complication because Clarendon Plantation does not want the trail across their property, so the trail will divert until the McLeod property. The County has approved \$50,000.00 as part of the match challenge. The goal for that section is to be completed by the end of the summer, depending on the funding. An area at the corner of Clarendon Road and Highway 21 (across from the gas station) will be the northern terminus. Mr. Semmler noted that he had ridden on the last train from Yemassee to Port Royal, along with Ms. Donnie Beer. During that ride several suggestions for the train track were discussed, including a dinner train and a walking trail. Discussion included the official opening of the trail section to be completed.

ROUND THE TABLE COMMENTS

- Councilman Vernon DeLoach urged that our infrastructure, especially along Ribaut Road, should be considered in future development.
- Mayor Samuel Murray noted the quorum present so the minutes can be passed.
- Mayor Keyserling noted that the Lady's Island discussion is important and a lot is hinging on that. He questions whether the park assets discussion had occurred or did it die? (*Mr.*

Anthony Criscitiello noted that Mr. Ken Driggers and Ms. Lisa Lord, both of the Beaufort County Open Land Trust, are working with the County planning staff to determine how these parks can be best utilized.) Mayor Keyserling asked about an inventory of existing parks and whether it can be funded with regional assets. He noted that the other municipalities should be included in the parks discussion. (Mr. Semmler noted that he would add the topic to the next agenda to revive the discussion.)

- Councilwoman Howard is looking forward to reviewing the tree ordinance and the traffic issues on Ribaut Road.
- Council Chairman Sommerville noted the tree ordinance should be looked at especially where the urban areas meet the rural areas since the problems seem to stem from the growth boundaries that this Committee approved. *(The City of Beaufort does not allow clear cutting until after 2 years, but a perimeter buffer is required per Ms. Libby Anderson; Mr. Semmler noted the Oyster Bluff clear cutting issue, and Mr. Anthony Criscitiello noted that there was no clearcutting for silviculture and Oyster Bluff's cutting was part of the development plan.)*

REVIEW OF NRPIC MEETING MINUTES: The September 15, 2015, meeting minutes were reviewed. No comments were offered. **Motion:** Councilwoman Alice Howard made the motion, and Councilman Brian Flewelling seconded the motion, **to accept the minutes as written.** The motion **was carried** (FOR: DeLoach, Flewelling, Howard, Keyserling, McFee, Murray, and Semmler; ABSENT: Cook, Cordray, Dawson, DeVito, and McBride).

OTHER BUSINESS: Next Scheduled Committee Meeting is Friday, March 25, 2016, in the Executive Conference Room, Beaufort County Administration Building, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort SC 29902.

ADJOURNMENT: Councilman Flewelling made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Mayor Keyserling seconded the motion. The motion carried (FOR: DeLoach, Flewelling, Howard, Keyserling, McFee, Murray, and Semmler; ABSENT: Cook, Cordray, Dawson, DeVito, and McBride). Mr. Semmler adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:14 a.m.

Note: The video link of the January 22, 2016, Northern Regional Plan Implementation Committee meeting is: http://beaufort.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=2474