

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

The regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan's Island Planning Commission was held at 6:30p.m. on Wednesday, March 14, 2007, in Town Council Chambers, 1610 Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information having been satisfied. Present were Committee members Hal Currey, Chairman, Elaine Fowler, Aussie Geer, Anne Kilpatrick (arrived late as noted herein), Bobby Thompson and John Winchester; Andy Benke, Town Administrator, Kent Prause, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Randy Robinson, Building Inspector, and Lisa Darrow, Assistant to the Administrator.

**I. Call to Order.** Chairman Currey called the meeting to order and stated that members of the press and public were duly notified in accordance with state law. He noted that all Commission members were present except Pat Votava, whose absence was excused. Chairman Currey welcomed Mr. Scott Parker who would make a presentation tonight regarding comprehensive commercial districts

**II. Approval of Previous Month's Minutes**

**MOTION: Mr. Winchester made a motion to approve the February 14, 2007 minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Thompson; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

**III. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION: Ms. Fowler made a motion to amend the agenda to allow Mr. Parker to address the Commission at this time (single item under VII New Business); seconded by Mr. Thompson; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

Mr. Thompson inquired whether the Commission would discuss the concept of a comprehensive commercial district during this meeting. Chairman Currey clarified that the Commission would discuss this matter as part of Mr. Parker's presentation.

**VII. New Business**

*Ms. Kilpatrick arrived at this time (7:05 p.m.)*

**Discussion of Community Commercial District with Scott Parker**

Mr. Scott Parker, Design Works, provided a Power point presentation on a downtown commercial district Master Plan his firm has been developing for the Town of Manning, South Carolina. Highlights of the presentation include:

- Mr. Parker stated municipalities' goals should be to:
  - Create a workable plan;
  - Obtain unanimous town leadership support for change;

- Hire a consultant from outside the Town to reinforce the perception of objectivity;
- Develop community consensus by including input from a diverse group of citizens;
- Consider all aspects of the public realm: streets, parks and all open space owned by the public. He stressed that the quality of the public realm was very important to a Town. He cautioned that improving public areas, such as streets and sidewalks, could create potential Town ownership and liability of areas currently maintained by SCDOT or Charleston County.
- Determining the Town's identity and overall objectives. Mr. Parker noted that the objective for the Town of Manning's downtown commercial district Master Plan was to draw business and tourism to the area;
- Socialization opportunities, which Mr. Parker submitted were critical for small towns. He submitted that communities should encourage "walkability" whenever possible.
- Sustainability and the maintenance of changes and how they interplay with the citizens' quality of life.
- Determine the total capacity for an area (maximum parking and building space) and implement zoning changes to support this master plan.

Mr. Parker noted that his firm provided the Town of Manning with a comprehensive vision for the public to embrace, broken into workable components or pieces that could be more easily implemented (parking and tree changes, for example). He noted that all of these changes were made to create a downtown area that would provide value to the Town, encourage retail and office use in the area, hide parking from roadside view and create a streetscape effect.

The Commission asked various questions regarding the Town of Manning master plan, to include consideration for handicap parking, selection and composition of the citizen group, patron cost for parking and public notice procedure for the proposed changes. Mr. Parker advised that marked handicap spaces remained on-street near business entrances, with remaining free patron parking in the rear of the building. He noted patrons would access businesses through the front street entrance, providing a sense of activity and energy to the streetscape. Mr. Parker noted that the Town of Manning has held four (4) major public meetings on this matter, with the citizens playing a critical role in promoting citizen feedback.

The Commission discussed possible funding of a comprehensive master commercial district plan for the Town of Sullivan's Island. Mr. Parker noted that the Town of Manning received a \$50,000 grant from the South Carolina State Department of Commerce, but members of the Commission expressed doubts the Town could obtain grant funds. The Commission commented that the Town has conducted some plans in the past, such as a parking inventory, but Mr. Parker opined that a comprehensive plan could not be piecemealed. He then submitted that the Town of Sullivan's Island needed a vision for the commercial district that could be embraced by Town officials and the

general public. Mr. Parker noted that a comprehensive plan could provide a level of confidence and assurance to potential Sullivan’s Island business owners that the Town had a continuity plan for neighboring properties.

Chairman Currey asked Mr. Parker to suggest some elements the Town would need to incorporate into a comprehensive commercial district. Mr. Parker suggested that the Town should incorporate a parking assessment and determine the capacity for the commercial district. The Commission discussed this matter for some time, commenting on the dangers of an unconstrained approach to development and the need to consider all public realms in planning, such as the post office, library and school. Mr. Parker stressed the need for the Town to consider the cost associated with assuming ownership of the streets and sidewalks. Thereafter the Commission discussed the challenges of bringing disparate viewpoints together to obtain consensus on the future of the commercial district. Ms. Geer submitted that the key to consensus building would be the establishment of a diverse focus group.

After further discussion on this matter, the following motion was made:

**MOTION: Mr. Winchester made a motion for the Planning Commission to submit a letter of recommendation to Town Council supporting the development of a Comprehensive Commercial Plan, seeking Town Council’s concurrence, input and support regarding the project; and with that, the Planning Commission would develop a scope of work to retain a consultant to develop this Comprehensive Commercial Plan; seconded by Ms. Fowler.**

**Discussion:**

The Commission briefly discussed the scope of the work for a prospective consultant. Mr. Winchester indicated he would prepare a letter from the Planning Commission to Town Council outlining our recommendations, rationale, concept and request for support for the Commission’s consideration prior to next month’s meeting. In response to Commission members’ queries, Mr. Parker indicated he would be willing to provide some assistance with the Commission’s efforts in developing RFP language.

**Call for the question:            MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

*The Commission returned to the order of business on the published agenda.*

**IV.    Correspondence – None**

**V.     General Public Comment**

**Jerry Kaynard, 2501 Atlantic Avenue** - Mr. Kaynard noted he spoke last month in opposition to the proposed ordinance amendment regarding split zone lots. He submitted that the points he made last month were not adequately reflected in the minutes. He reiterated that he is in opposition to the split zone ordinance for the following reasons: (1) the Town has not demonstrated abusive examples of split zoned lots; (2) the proposed amendments come without consultation and recommendation as a result of expert

analysis; and (3) the ordinance applies only to split-zoned lots, not to adjacent property owners, and would be unfair and inequitable.

## **VI. Unfinished Business**

### **1. Definition of Lot or Lot of Record.**

Chairman Currey noted that the Commission conclusively considered and discussed this matter last month. Zoning Administrator Prause noted that some of the language was clarified pursuant to Ms. Fowler's suggestions (Exhibit A).

**MOTION: Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the alternate definition of a lot of record as presented (Exhibit A); seconded by Ms. Kilpatrick.**

#### **Discussion:**

The Commission discussed modification of the definition, with Ms. Fowler suggesting the deletion of the following language: "...provided, however, that for the purpose of determining whether such lot is a separate, distinct building lot, or lot suitable for independent conveyance, any and all restrictions and limitations referenced in the chain of title shall be considered." Ms. Fowler submitted this language was unnecessary and could cause future confusion. Zoning Administrator Prause noting he included the language to clarify to property owners various restrictions which might impact on the ability to improve a lot. The Commission briefly debated the merits and consequences of incorporating the proposed language.

#### **Call for the question:**

**MOTION PASSED FIVE (1) TO ONE (1) – Ms. Fowler voted against**

Chairman Currey noted this matter would be scheduled for public hearing at next month's meeting.

### **2. Rules of Procedure.** Chairman Currey noted that the Commission's Rules of Procedure were approved at last month's meeting, after some slight recommendations from Ms. Fowler, who was absent last month.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned (motion by Ms. Kilpatrick; seconded by Chairman Currey and unanimously passed) at approximately 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Darrow  
Asst. to Administrator

Approved at April 11, 2007 Regular Planning Commission Meeting