

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
February 14, 2007, 6:30 PM

Members Present: Hal Currey, Pat Votava, Aussie Geer, John Winchester and Anne Kilpatrick.

Members Absent: Elaine Fowler and Bobby Thompson.

Staff Present: Randy Robinson, Kent Prause and Andy Benke.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hal Currey at 6:30 PM. He confirmed that the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act with regard to public notice have been met.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Anne Kilpatrick and seconded by Aussie Geer to approve the January 2007 minutes. Discussion followed regarding rules of procedure and election of Vice Chair Pat Votava. Additionally, it was decided to remove the adopted rules of procedure from the minutes until such time that Commissioner Fowler could review the changes. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

III. Approval of Agenda

Chair Currey acknowledged that the Commission was holding a public hearing this evening to address various changes to the zoning ordinance. He suggested that the public hearing portion of the meeting be brought forward to item IV. Anne Kilpatrick made a motion to amend the Agenda to move the public hearing to item IV; Aussie Geer seconded the motion, and the motion carried by unanimous vote. The order of the amended agenda read Call to Order, Approval of Minutes; Approval of Agenda; Public Hearing; Correspondence; General Public Comment; Unfinished Business; New Business; and Adjournment.

IV. Public Hearing

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider an ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance as contained in Sections 21-19 D; 21-24 F; 21-27 D; 21-31 D; 21-49 D; 21-52 C; 21-54 F; and 21-59 D with pending ordinance in effect.

Chair Currey noted that all who wish to speak should be documented on the sign-in sheet. Each speaker should provide their name and address before commenting on the ordinance. Remarks will be limited to three (3) to four (4) minutes according to the Planning Commission Rules of Procedure. No person speaking shall be subject to cross examination by members of the public. After all of the public has had the opportunity to speak, the Chair will close the public hearing. At that time Commission members may question members of the public or staff. Following that, the Commission will deliberate and vote on the amendments.

Lorcan Lucey of 2211 Myrtle Avenue opposes reducing the construction on split zoned lots by 20% because it is not a comprehensive approach to the problems of the area. He gave an overview of the recently formed citizens committee which is making a comprehensive review of the Commercial District with the assistance of the East Cooper Planning Council. He stressed the need for ordinances that would address parking.

Jackie Shedrow of 2214 Jasper Boulevard agrees with the previous speaker that Council should have a comprehensive approach to the Commercial District but that she supports the amendments as proposed.

Rusty Bennett of 3124 Marshall Boulevard confirmed the hard work of the citizens committee working on the issues of the Commercial District. With regard to the specific amendments as proposed and to which he opposes, he reminded the Planning Commission that the language originated out of a concept to subdivide the split zoned lots. Now that subdivision was not a consideration, the building allowances seemed punitive and there was no reason to treat owners of this property any differently than other property owners.

Jerry Kaynard of 2501 Atlantic Avenue spoke in opposition to the amendments as proposed because of the punitive restrictions to owners of split zoned lots. He reiterated that the allowances originated with a discussion of subdivision of split zoned lots. While most of the zoning ordinance received a comprehensive review, the Commercial District has only been "tinkered with" over the years. To that end he advocates a comprehensive approach by Council to the Commercial District. With time running out and in closing he requested 2 alternatives to the amendments: (1) the DRB reviews all construction on residential lots; and, (2) the ordinance adopt a cap of 5000 square feet for a commercial structure.

With no further speakers on the topic Chair Currey closed the public hearing.

John Winchester inquired about the East Cooper Planning Council. Kent Prause explained that the group is formed to address issues in Mt. Pleasant and Awendaw.

Pat Votava moved to accept the changes to the ordinance in Section 21-19 D; 21-24 F; 21-27 D; 21-31 D; 21-49 D; 21-52 C; 21-54 F; and 21-59 D as written. The motion was seconded by John Winchester. In discussion, Chair Currey noted that the factor which differentiates split zoned lots in the CC District from residential lots is the fact that owners of standard half acre lots are not permitted to build two structures as one might do on split zoned lots. John Winchester added that many of the commercial zone buildings are not massive in terms of scale. If a house were to be built to maximum square footage and height under the ordinance it may create an undesired effect visually. John Winchester further added that a master plan for the commercial area is sorely needed. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

John Winchester felt that a clear message should be communicated to Council for a comprehensive plan of the commercial district. There was consensus among all members present that a comprehensive approach to the Commercial District would be beneficial. Chair Currey offered to deliver that statement at the next Council meeting.

V. Correspondence

The Sullivan's Island Central Area Ad Hoc Citizens Committee submitted a survey as information.

VI. General Public Comments

Council Member Pat O'Neill acknowledged the challenge facing the Planning Commission regarding parking in the Commercial District. There was general discussion of the parking inventory done in 2000.

VII. Unfinished Business

Chair Currey noted that the Comprehensive Plan amendments were made at the December 2006 meeting. There was some discussion of a definition of a "lot"; however, Kent Prause felt that the existing definition would suffice. The matter of "lot" definition will be continued at the March 2007 meeting.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business for the Commission.

IX. Adjourn

The motion to adjourn was made by Pat Votava and seconded by Aussie Geer. The motion carried by unanimous vote.