

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN’S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 9, 2016**

A regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan’s Island Planning Commission was held at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 9, 2016 at Town Hall, 2050-B Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act satisfied. Present: Commissioners Gary Visser (Chair), Sydney Cook (Vice-Chair), Charlie Cole, Carl Hubbard and Manda Poletti. Staff members present: Zoning Administrator Henderson, Asst. to Administrator Darrow and Building Official Robinson.

Call to Order. Chair Visser called the meeting to order, stated press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and Commission had a quorum (Commissioner Currey had an excused absence). Two residents and no media were present.

I. Approval of Agenda – Commission approved agenda with no changes

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Cole moved to approve the February 10, 2016 minutes; seconded by Ms. Cook; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

III. Text Amendments

1. Stormwater Management Regulations: Town Council requests review of potential Zoning Ordinance text amendments to require onsite stormwater management regulations for residential and nonresidential development [Zoning Ordinance Section 21-26, Impervious Coverage; Section 21-13, Increase or decrease in natural elevations prohibited]

Continuation of topic introduced at the February 2016 Commission meeting
Staff Update (Zoning Administrator Henderson)

Background:

- Council directed Commission to consider the merits of zoning ordinance text amendments that would clarify the regulations related to residential stormwater runoff. Council reaffirmed, at its February 16, 2016 Council meeting, its desire for Council to consider text amendments on stormwater management zoning regulations.
- Currently Staff can request but cannot mandate a property owner, seeking to put infill on the property, to retain and provide a certified engineering stormwater management design/plan.

Concern: Currently property owners who incorporate development infill, elevating the topography of the property, are required to show how sheet runoff would be moved away from the lot and into the current Town stormwater collection systems. There may be unintended consequences to neighboring properties located on the block who find stormwater runoff

collecting on their lots. Text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance could require homeowners to provide Staff evidence of a plan to successfully manage stormwater on-site.

Staff Comments:

Benchmarking/Research

Zoning Administrator Henderson benchmarked stormwater management policies and zoning regulations in neighboring municipalities: Isle of Palms, Folly Beach and Mt Pleasant are three local examples.

Research results: most municipalities have a stand-alone stormwater management ordinance, but few require small residential property owners to develop stormwater management plans. Sullivan’s Island has a stormwater management ordinance that applies to residential parcels half- (½) acre or larger in size.

Zoning Administrator offered draft language options (**Exhibit A**) to address stormwater management for properties elevating a lot with fill dirt (1ft of fill dirt triggers this policy), noting two potential options. He recommended Option 2 that was developed from language in the City of Isle of Palms ordinance.

Commission Comments:

Commission discussion centered on the following:

1. What would be the trigger for the Town to require a stormwater management plan from residents:
 - a. Minimum size of impervious surface improvement – 500sf, 600 sf, 1000, sf
 - b. Any current history of stormwater runoff on neighboring properties or demonstration that development would create this problem
2. What options would property owner have when obtaining a certified professional to create the stormwater management plan: civil engineer only or also registered landscape architect?

Public Comments

Skipper Condon, 2201 I’On Avenue, expressed support for Town initiatives to mandate property owners address stormwater runoff on their properties, concurrent with development plans. He reminded the Commission of his comments last month regarding the thousands of dollars he has spent in the past few years trying to mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff issues on his lot. He advocated for the Town to use this opportunity to be proactive regarding stormwater runoff every time a development creates the runoff problem, whether the property owner is building something small or large on the lot.

Rick Graham, 2102 I’On Avenue, echoed Mr. Condon’s comments and questioned how small an improvement would have to be to impact stormwater runoff on a property as runoff from any size development has a cumulative effect.

Commission asked Staff to modify draft language for the following:

1. 625sf of impervious improvement (average size of a garage footprint) triggers a stormwater management plan
2. A civil engineer and/or registered landscape architect shall prepare and certify a plan.

Commission asked Staff to provide photographs of various impervious structures and improvements at 625sf (i.e. pool or garage) for reference, and, a general estimate of how much a civil engineer and registered landscape architect might charge for a stormwater management plan. Additional anecdotal experience from neighboring planning directors regarding this topic was also requested.

No action taken – item to be continued for discussion in March

IV. Items for Consideration

1. Planning Commission Terms: Town Council request review and consideration of Planning Commissioner term extensions from two years to three years.

Commissioners noted other Town Boards/Commissions serve three-year terms, except Municipal Election Commission (six-year terms). Commissioners indicated they were willing to extend their terms of service by one year should Council wish to make this change.

Commissioners also noted they meet at 6:30PM, a time they have been told by residents is confusing as most other Board/Commission and Council meetings start at 6:00PM. Commission agreed to start future meetings at 6:00PM and directed Staff to make proper advertisement to Council and the public.

MOTION: Ms. Poletti moved to recommend to Council a transition from 2-year terms to 3-year terms, to align with the service terms of other Boards & Commissions (Board of Zoning Appeals, Tree Commission and Design Review Board); seconded by Mr. Cole; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Commission briefly discussed the value of conforming the Planning Commission meeting start times with that of other Council and Board/Commission meetings: 6:00PM instead of 6:30PM. It was noted that regular meetings of Council, Board of Zoning Appeals and Design Review Board begin at 6:00PM.

MOTION: Ms. Cook made a motion to change meeting start times, beginning in April, to 6:00PM (previously 6:30PM) to align with the start time of other regular Town board and Council meetings; seconded by Mr. Cole; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

2. **Staff Update on Town Projects** – oral report
3. **Correspondence/Comments** – No written correspondence

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m. (Mr. Cole motioned; Ms. Poletti seconded; unanimously passed).

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Darrow
Asst. to Administrator

Approved at the Wednesday, April 13, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting

EXHIBIT A
Town of Sullivan's Island Planning Commission
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DRAFT LANGUAGE:

Option 1: Add language to require a stormwater management plan (SWMP) for any fill or any elevation change that changes stormwater runoff. Plan must be certified by a licensed/professional civil engineer.

Sec. 21-13. Increase or decrease in natural elevation prohibited.

(1) Any importation of materials of any type or re-contouring of a lot's existing contours that increased a lot's existing ground elevation more than one (1) foot above existing grade and results or may result in elevating an existing or proposed structure is strictly prohibited.

(2) Any decrease in a lot's existing ground elevation is strictly prohibited.

(3)

stormwater runoff for such lot without the Building Official's or Zoning Administrator's prior approval of a stormwater management plan. The stormwater management plan shall include the stamp and signature of a duly licensed and qualified professional, all existing and proposed topographical features of the lot, and a statement by the professional certifying that the filling or grading of the lot will not adversely impact the drainage of any adjacent properties, drainage systems or rights-of-way.

Option 2: This option would be more restrictive. In addition to requiring a SWMP for grading and fill, add language to require a plan for exceeding 25% impervious surfaces or adding a 1000 sq. ft. surfaced.

Sec. 21-13. Increase or decrease in natural elevation prohibited.

(1) Any importation of materials of any type or re-contouring of a lot's existing contours that increased a lot's existing ground elevation more than one (1) foot above existing grade and results or may result in elevating an existing or proposed structure is strictly prohibited.

(2) Any decrease in a lot's existing ground elevation is strictly prohibited.

(3) No lot shall be graded or filled to an elevation that results in a change to the existing stormwater runoff for such lot without the Building Official's or Zoning Administrator's prior approval of a stormwater management plan. The stormwater management plan shall include the stamp and signature of a duly licensed and qualified professional, all existing and proposed topographical features of the lot, and a statement by the professional certifying that the filling or grading of the lot will not adversely impact the drainage of any adjacent properties, drainage systems or rights-of-way.

- (4) Additionally, the following site changes will require the submittal of a stormwater management plan from a licensed professional engineer:
- a. Increasing the impervious surface beyond 25% of a property's total area as defined in Section 21-26;
 - b. Any new building construction or addition of impervious surface (pool, driveway, parking area, etc.) to a site in excess of 1000 square feet in area;
 - c. Additional submittal materials, design specifications and maintenance schedules may be requested at the discretion of the Building Official and Zoning Administrator.
