

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN’S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 10, 2017**

A regular meeting was held at 6:00PM, this date, at Town Hall, 2056 Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act satisfied. Present: Commissioners Sydney Cook (Vice-Chair), Charlie Cole, Hal Currey, Carl Hubbard and Tim Watterson. Staff members: Zoning Administrator Henderson, Building Official Robinson, Asst. to Administrator Darrow and Administrator Benke.

Call to Order. Vice-Chair Cook called the meeting to order, stated press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and a quorum was present (Gary Visser and Manda Poletti had excused absences); one (1) audience member (Councilmember Rita Langley) and one (1) media member (Moultrie News) present.

I. Approval of Agenda – approved as presented

Staff noted no public correspondence has been received for this meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Cole moved to approve the March 8, 2017 minutes (no meeting in April 2017); seconded by Mr. Currey. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

III. Public Hearing

Vice-Chair Cook reviewed the process for public hearings: public is offered the opportunity, after the Staff Report, to ask questions related to that report. Thereafter the public is encouraged to offer general comments during the public comment portion of the public hearing.

She noted that the Commission makes a recommendation to Council after this public hearing. Council has the latitude to either take up, dismiss and/or change any recommendations made by this Commission through its legislative ordinance process.

- 1. Standards for Elevating Historic Structures: Text amendment to add Zoning Ordinance §21-44 A-C (Elevating Historic Buildings) standards for elevating of historic structures in the Single-Family Residential (RS) District; and, Zoning Ordinance §21-59 B, Standards for Elevating Buildings in the Community Commercial (CC) District**

Staff Report: Zoning Administrator Henderson gave an outline of the chronology of the issue:

Chronology of Issue:

Design Review Board

2015-June 2016

Decision: DRB approves several recommendations for Town Council in lieu of creating design guidelines. Recommended to create language to regulate elevating historic buildings.

Land Use & Natural Resources Committee of Council

July 2016

Decision: DRB recommendations presented to LUNR. Sent to Planning Commission for study

Planning Commission

September 2016

Decision: PC recommends to Council “no” to design guidelines and to move forward with text amendment to regulate elevation projects.

Land Use & Natural Resources Committee of Council

January 2017

Decision: LUNR sends back to Planning Commission for further study and potential public hearing.

Planning Commission

February & March

2017

Discussed and reverted draft text amendment for Public Hearing before the Commission.

Background:

As Sullivan’s Island is located in the floodplain, DRB receives regular requests to elevate historic structures to comply with FEMA regulations (FEMA incentivizes activity through flood insurance premiums).

Preservation considerations from elevating designated historic structures:

- Removes the historic perspective of the home, altering the streetscape and may possibly adversely affect the overall standing of the historic district;
- Alters the historic massing, materials and architectural features of the home;
- Alters landscape and other site features (vistas and view of surrounding properties);
- Alters traditional access points (addition of porches and stairs).

DRB has recommended an integrated design approach to be taken when considering elevation of designated historic structures (Sullivan’s Island Landmarks and Traditional Island Resources). These guidelines were derived from the *Mississippi and Louisiana Elevation Design Guidelines*.

Staff provided potential text amendments for Commission’s consideration – Exhibit A.

Commission Comments:

Zoning Administrator reviewed the high points of the ordinance amendments:

Height: structures may be elevated to one (1’) foot above base flood elevation (BFE) as outlined for other structures in the Building Code.

Composition and Scale: ordinance will formalize the requirement to review composition and scale and offer design options to mitigate impact of elevation on the same.

Perspective and Orientation: as with composition and scale, the owner will now be required to consider these factors and provide design options to mitigate impact

Scale Minimization and Architectural Screening: again, the owner will be required to consider what design options are available to mitigate impact of elevation on the historical look of the property and for neighborhood compatibility.

Commissioners commented that improvements at 1102 Osceola, a low-lying lot that required significant elevation to get to BFE, prompted many residents to question the Town's process and guidelines for reviewing and allowing elevation of properties. Commissioners questioned if there was anything else this body could do to tighten the review process.

Zoning Administrator Henderson noted that Town staff worked with the owners of 1102 Osceola, as they have been doing on a staff-level with other homeowners, to minimize the visual impact of elevating historic homes. He noted this ordinance change would codify the Staff's process for these applications and commented that the proposed text amendment is the result of multiple meetings and discussions between staff, DRB, Planning Commission and the Land Use & Natural Resources Committee of Council. He submitted the draft ordinance language is clear and enforceable.

Public Hearing opened at 6:13PM and closed at 6:15PM – no public comments made and Town received no written comments prior to the public hearing.

MOTION: Mr. Currey recommended that Council approve Zoning Ordinance text amendments to §21-44 A-C (Elevating Historic Buildings) standards for elevating of historic structures in the Single-Family Residential (RS) District; and, Zoning Ordinance §21-59 B, Standards for Elevating Buildings in the Community Commercial (CC) District, as outlined in Exhibit A; seconded by Mr. Cole.

Discussion:

Mr. Hubbard recommended changing verbiage in paragraph B (Exhibit A) for clarification (change "when" to "while").

MOTION TO AMEND: Mr. Currey moved to amend the first motion to modify language in Exhibit A, Paragraph B, to read "while" instead of "when;" seconded by Mr. Cole. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

AMENDED MOTION: Mr. Currey moved to approve the amended motion to recommend Council approval of Zoning Ordinance text amendments for to §21-44 A-C (Elevating Historic Buildings) standards for elevating of historic structures in the Single-Family Residential (RS) District; and, Zoning Ordinance §21-59 B, Standards for Elevating Buildings in the Community Commercial (CC) District, as outlined in Exhibit A; seconded by Mr. Cole. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

IV. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Update

Zoning Administrator Henderson reported:

- Town has retained the BCD Council of Government to provide development of the 2018 Plan re-write. Staff will meet with BCD-COG representatives in the near future to discuss the timeline and project parameters.
- July Planning Commission meeting will be the scheduled kick-off for the Comprehensive Plan project:
 - BCD-COG representative will be present by/before this meeting to offer overview and receive Commissioner feedback
 - Commissioners are requested to review the current documents, compile questions, comments and suggestions, and, forward to Zoning Administrator Henderson in advance of the June 14, 2017 meeting. Ryan McClure with the BCD-COG will be in attendance to review the upcoming schedule and planning process with the group during this meeting.

Process:

1. Zoning Administrator Henderson will meet with Department Heads to review Capital Projects, review current inventory of departments and get initial Department Head comments.
2. July/August Commission meetings: Commissioners will review current conditions
3. Fall – Community workshop to develop “vision” and receive public feedback
4. January/February 2018: target deadline for a draft report
5. March/May 2018: target deadline to finalize Comprehensive Plan

Commissioners stressed the public desires to be informed and engaged in the Comprehensive Plan rewrite – in the early phases and throughout the process.

V. Staff Update on Town Projects – oral report given

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:36PM (Mr. Hubbard motioned; Mr. Currey seconded; unanimously passed).

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Darrow
Asst. to Administrator

Approved at the June 14, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting

Sec 21-44. Elevating Historic Buildings.

A. Purpose.

To preserve the character of designated historic properties and surrounding neighborhoods, an integrated design approach shall be taken when elevating Sullivan's Island Landmarks and Traditional Island Resources.

B. Design Standards.

Any proposed elevation or site relocation of an historic structure shall carefully consider site conditions (site elevations and topography), parcel access, typology of architecture, building composition and scale, and its context with adjoining historic properties ~~when~~ while employing the following standards:

- (1) Height: To minimize the height of elevating historic structures, the finished floor elevation (FFE) shall exceed no more than one (1) foot above the required FEMA base flood elevation (BFE).
- (2) Composition and Scale: To maintain an historic building's visual character and design compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, an elevation design plan shall be submitted to illustrate the composition and scale of the building's principal architectural features are being maintained and will remain proportional to the elevated foundation.
- (3) Perspective and Orientation: Any proposed elevation or relocation should maintain the building's historic perspective from the principal right-of-way. All historic architectural elements should be maintained after elevation or relocation.
- (4) Scale Minimization and Architectural Screening: Appropriate measures should be introduced into the site design to reduce or eliminate negative visual effects from the elevation of a historic structure. These elements include fencing, landscaping (foundation plantings), stair configuration and any other site considerations noted by the Design Review Board.

C. Design Review Board.

Design Review Board shall make case-by-case determinations of the above design criteria to achieve greater neighborhood compatibility and to achieve the goals and standards of the Historic Preservation Overlay District (Article XI).

Sec 21-59 Foundation height. (Commercial District Regulations)

A. Purpose.

Due to FEMA regulations and Hurricane Hugo, the foundations of Principal Buildings are substantially elevated; although not presently the case within the CC-District, this provision is intended to prevent Principal Buildings from being elevated higher than FEMA requirements.

D. Design standards for Elevated Buildings.

- (1) The bottom elevation of a Principal Building's 1st floor joists shall be no more than two (2) feet above the FEMA base flood elevation
- (2) The Principal Building's finished floor shall not be more than three (3) feet above the FEMA base flood elevation.
- (3) Exception: For Principal Buildings constructed no more than three feet (3') above grade, the rear one half (½) of the Principal Building may be elevated to permit parking underneath the Principal Building.
- (4) Elevating designated historic buildings within the CC-District shall be required to comply with the standards established in Section 21-44.

E. Design Review Board.

The Design Review Board may grant a modification in this Design Standard of no more than one foot if this or other modifications achieves greater Neighborhood Compatibility as described in article XII.