

**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

A regular meeting was held at 4:00 PM, this date, VIA Zoom, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act satisfied. Present: Commissioners Gary Visser (Chair), Sydney Cook (Vice-Chair), Charlie Cole, Carl Hubbard, David Peterseim and Manda Poletti. Steve Herlong, architect, was present to answer questions the Commission might have.

Staff members: Joe Henderson, Director of Planning, Randy Robinson, Building Official, and Pamela Otto, Planning Commission Secretary.

**Call to Order.** Chair Visser called the meeting to order, stated press and public were duly notified pursuant to Freedom of Information Act Requirements and all Commissioners were present except Hal Currey (excused absence). No public or media present.

**A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – approved as presented**

**B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 12, 2020**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Mr. Hubbard, seconded by Ms. Poletti, to approve the Planning Commission Minutes dated February 12, 2020. This motion passed unanimously.

**C. PUBLIC INPUT – no written correspondence received**

**D. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Foundation Height and FEMA Base Flood Elevation:** Consideration of potential text adjustments to section 21-31 foundation height regulations for structures relating to preliminary FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) updates. The Commission and staff held a discussion of potential impacts of the updated maps.

- Henderson and Robinson discussed the new FIRM maps, expected in summer 2020. These maps will be the first change in 30 years. It was mentioned that the BFE (Base Flood Elevation) will be much lower across the island, as much as 5 to 8 feet lower. That means lower flood insurance rates and that new homes do not need to be built as high as they do now. The reason to change the ordinance is to allow for parking and storage under the house, increase protection from storm surge, focus on community resilience per the Comprehensive Plan and to discourage the construction of more detached garages (impervious surfaces).
- Henderson reviewed the proposed changes to the ordinance. The purpose would be changed to state the emphasis on minimizing flood risk and protection against storm surge. Secondly, it would mention limiting height to ensure Neighborhood

Compatibility. The design standards would change to reflect that with the bottom elevation of the Principle Building's lowest horizontal structural member at no more than 8 feet above finished grade, with the finished floor no more than 9 feet above finished grade. The Design Review Board will be allowed a 1-foot modification.

- Steve Herlong addressed questions from Commissioners. He discussed Neighborhood Compatibility and what the term means. Mr. Visser asked would this mean more homes with a third story. The maximum height allowed would not be changed and third floor square footage is limited to 400 square feet. There was some discussion about if somebody could not build their house high enough to park under, there would be an increase of the number of garages on the island. Mr. Herlong and Henderson discussed the limitations on garages as they pertain to allowed square footage for a structure and lot coverage.
- Henderson mentioned that the definition section of the ordinance should be changed to reflect and define the new terms in the regulatory language.

Chair Visser and Commissioners all agreed to Henderson and Robinson setting the definitions for the new regulatory terms.

Motion: Motion was made by Mr. Cole, seconded by Mr. Peterseim, to forward the draft language and definitions of the ordinance to the LUNR Committee to refine before it goes to a public meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 4 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Cole, seconded by Ms. Cook, to adjourn at 4:56 p.m. This motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela Otto  
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved at the August 12, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting