

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN'S ISLAND  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, May 13, 2009**

A regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan's Island Planning Commission was held at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 13, 2009 in Town Council Chambers, 1610 Middle Street all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Commission members Chairman Hal Currey, Vice-Chairman John Winchester, Aussie Geer, Nicky Bluestein, Anne Osborne Kilpatrick, Bobby Thompson and Elaine Fowler. Staff included Administrator Andy Benke, Assistant to Administrator Lisa Darrow and Building Official Randy Robinson.

**I. Call to Order.** Chairman Currey called the meeting to order and stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law.

**II. Approval of Agenda.**

**MOTION: Ms. Kilpatrick made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Ms. Geer; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

**III. Approval of Minutes.**

**MOTION: Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the April 7, 2009 regular meeting minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Bluestein; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.**

**IV. Correspondence & General Public Comments –**

Chairman Currey welcomed Mayor Carl Smith to the meeting, noting he was the only member of the public present. Mayor Carl Smith wished to comment on a New Business item on the agenda (new Town Hall). Chairman Currey suggested the Mayor make his comments at that time.

**V. New Business -**

Chairman Currey commented that Commission member Bluestein requested the opportunity to raise a few Town related topics and/or concepts for discussion this evening. These items were included on the agenda under New Business.

**1. Build New Town Hall/Police Station connected with Fire Station**

Mr. Bluestein endorsed concept of a consolidated government complex in the Commercial District behind and attached to the current Fire Station, articulating the following benefits:

- a. Central command center in the event of a hurricane or other emergency event;
- b. Police Department and Town Hall would have more modern, FEMA compliant offices;
- c. Utilize efficiencies of space providing a cost savings (shared workrooms, office equipment, reception space, etc).
- d. Provide increased Town staff presence in the Commercial district, particularly related to police.

- e. 1602 Thompson Avenue warehouse and dock could be converted to a Town controlled park/greenspace area with a playground and facilities for water recreation.

Mr. Bluestein suggested that one means to fund the new complex would be the sell of the current Town Hall/Police Department at 1610 Middle Street.

Mayor Smith provided background on another initiative for the Town to secure currently State owned property for municipal purposes: 1602 Thompson Avenue warehouse and dock, located behind 1610 Middle Street. Mayor Smith and Administrator Benke advised the Commission that the Town was currently negotiating with federal and state government entities to sell Battery Logan, located next to Fort Moultrie, to the Federal Government for funds sufficient to purchase and renovate 1602 Thompson Avenue warehouse and dock for public use. Mayor Smith stated his vision was a new Town Hall/Police Station at 1602 Thompson Avenue, public use of the dock for non-motorized water vehicles and public enjoyment of the vistas. Administrator Benke noted the potential complex could be Sullivan's Island's version of Mt. Pleasant's Alhambra Hall.

Mayor Smith and Administrator Benke noted that the benefits of this opportunity included:

- a. Preservation and protection of an historic property that is zoned single-family residential use;
- b. Modern, FEMA compliant offices for Town Hall and Police Department;
- c. Last opportunity for public to gain good access and significant vistas of the marsh and Intercoastal Waterway;
- d. Battery Logan, an Endicott fortification, would be maintained and preserved by Fort Moultrie Staff, who have knowledge, training and funds for such efforts;
- e. Addition of Battery Logan would enhance Fort Moultrie to Monument Park status in the National Park Service system.

Building Official Robinson noted that, with FEMA requirements, the floor of the Thompson Avenue warehouse would need to be built up a few feet and the mechanicals and ductwork would run through the ceilings.

Mayor Smith noted that, in the past, Council has discussed the future of 1602 Thompson Avenue and potential municipal uses for it; however, no decision has been made. Mayor Smith, in answer to Mr. Winchester's query, stated that the Town would have a better idea in June whether the proposed Battery Logan and 1602 Thompson Avenue transactions would be viable.

Mayor Smith thanked Mr. Bluestein for his suggestion of a consolidated municipal complex in the Commercial District, but expressed his personal concerns about exacerbating current parking problems in the Commercial District by adding the impact of Town Hall and the Police Department traffic and parking in this area.

Mayor Smith noted that no decision has been made by Town Council on a future Town Hall complex or its location. He submitted that Council would probably want to gather public feedback before it made any decisions on a future Town Hall and its location.

Commission members discussed different scenarios for a new Town Hall and/or Police Department:

- a. Consolidated municipal complex in Commercial District;
- b. New Town Hall/Police Station at 1602 Thompson Avenue;
- c. Move Police Department only to a new building next to the Fire Station.

In summary, Chairman Currey noted the Town is already considering options to address the need for an improved Town Hall and/or Police Department, has a variety of location/scenario options available, and is researching and/or pursuing a number of funding options to accomplish any changes.

## **2. Bike Path – length of Middle Street**

Mr. Bluestein proposed the concept of a continuous, marked bike path the length of the Island on Middle Street, with SCDOT paying for the improvements.

Administrator Benke noted that bike paths must comply with ASHTO standards that require, among other specifications, minimum 5 foot right-of-way width running parallel to vehicles. Administrator Benke then reviewed other bike path improvement projects currently in-process on the Island: Jasper Boulevard improvements and Hwy 701 improvements on the Ben Sawyer bridge approaches. He stated that the Town anticipates increased bicycle traffic onto the Island after the Ben Sawyer bridge renovation has been completed.

The Commission discussed bicycle lane improvements for some time. Mr. Winchester suggested that conceptual drawings of various lane improvements would help him and the public better understand ideas. Chairman Currey suggested the Town avail itself of information that BCD-COG could provide, namely through Vonie Gilreath (BCD-COG) who is very involved in bicycle lane improvements.

General Commission consensus was to wait for feedback from the public on this issue as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **3. Spoleto Event on Sullivan’s Island**

Mr. Bluestein suggested bringing Spoleto events back to the Town at various venues. Commission noted this topic was not in the purview of the Planning Commission, but generally agreed bringing Spoleto events to the Island was a good idea. Chairman Currey stated he would send a letter to the Recreation Committee of Council.

## **4. Historic Preservation Initiatives and Committee**

Mr. Bluestein suggested increasing awareness and steps to preserve historic homes and sites on the Island. Some of his suggested included:

- a. Raising awareness of historical properties on Island;
- b. Public education on historic preservation;
- c. Increased/specialized historic training for Design Review Board members;
- d. Closer involvement with the SC Historic Preservation Office.

The Commission floated the idea of creating either another advisory committee or citizens' committee on Town history and historic preservation.

Asst. to Administrator Darrow reported on the Certified Local Government Program through the SC Historic Preservation Office, an initiative that Councilman O'Neil had expressed interest in pursuing. She reported that the CLG Program would be an opportunity for the Town to corral the different historic preservation efforts it has already initiated and align those with the SHPO CLG Program. The benefits would be:

- a. SHPO would certify the Town's historic preservation initiatives;
- b. SHPO would review the Town's current ordinances on historic preservation, recommending changes that would align the Town's code to state standards;
- c. The Town would be eligible for federal historic preservation grant funding only available to municipalities designated as CLG's;
- d. The Design Review Board, Staff and any other designated historic preservation committees would be eligible for training by SHPO on specific issues related to historic preservation;
- e. SHPO staff would serve as an additional resource for Town Staff on historic preservation matters and ordinance changes, as SHPO would be intimately knowledgeable on the Town's program;
- f. The recertification process would provide continuity for Town historic preservation efforts as Town Council members, DRB members and Staff come onboard or leave Sullivan's Island public service; and
- g. CLG status could be a tool to forward the historic preservation Needs & Goal articulated in the draft 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

The Commission generally agreed that pursuing Certified Local Government Program status would be desirable for the Town. Chairman Currey stated the Planning Commission's endorsement would be forwarded to Real Estate Committee Chair, Pat O'Neil.

## **5. Sidewalk Dining – addressed**

Mr. Bluestein submitted that the Town needed to address the impact of outside dining in the Commercial District. He suggested one option could be the establishment of a sidewalk café, similar to City of Charleston. Mr. Bluestein provided the Commission with copies of the City of Charleston's sidewalk café program and regulations (**Exhibit A**).

The Commission briefly reviewed the regulations for the sidewalk café program, noting that the City of Charleston issues a one-year renewable permit for dining space on sidewalks.

It was observed that the City of Charleston defines sidewalk café's as private dining spaces that are an extension of a retail eating establishments on City right-of-way sidewalks. Administrator Benke noted that, on Sullivan's Island, the restaurants had outdoor eating space on private property, not Town right-of-way.

Commission members submitted that the impact of outdoor eating on the Island had more to do with the length of time this activity occurred and the potential noise it generated late in the evenings. The Commission generally agreed that this topic would be raised and debated at the public hearings for the Master Community Commercial District Plan later this year. As such, the Commission should not proffer any recommendations at this time.

Chairman Currey thanked Mr. Bluestein for bringing forward his ideas and generating discussion on a variety of topics relevant to the Town.

## **VI. Unfinished Business**

### **The Planning Commission received reports on the following ongoing projects:**

#### **A. Accreted Land Management Plan Consultant Services – Status Update Administrator Benke**

- Town provided consultant team, Coastal Science & Engineering (SC&E)/Sabine & Waters with last round of edits on second draft of vendor's report.
- Next step is scheduling of a public hearing, most likely in late June.
- Once public hearing has been scheduled, the vendor's report will be released to the general public and placed on the Town's website. Currently, the draft documents have some obvious typo's and scrivener data errors and Town did not want to release a deficient document.

#### **B. Master Community Commercial (CC) District Plan Consultant Services – Status Update Administrator Benke**

- Seamon Whiteside Associates/Urban Edge continues to coordinate with SCDOT for the agency's response to some road improvements concepts, in particular reverse angle parking which has never been considered in South Carolina before.
- Once the consultants have received SCDOT's response, Urban Edge will establish some cost estimates for improvements from Station 22.5 to Station 22.
- Thereafter the public hearing date will be scheduled.

#### **C. Noise Committee**

##### **Ms. Anne Kilpatrick & Mayor Smith**

- Ms. Kilpatrick noted the Noise Committee, of which she was a member, received good public feedback. She deferred reporting to Mayor Smith, the chair of this ad hoc working committee.
- Mayor Smith noted the Noise Committee provided a number of recommendations to Council, with enforcement of current ordinances being particularly advocated by Judge Maloney.
- Mayor Smith reported the Town is pursuing an incremental approach in dealing with noise concerns, with enforcement being the first approach. Mayor Smith did observe that the use of the low speed vehicle, recently donated to the Town, has been helpful in both the prevention of infractions and enforcement of regulations.

#### **D. 2008 Sullivan's Island Comprehensive Plan – Status update Chairman Currey**

- Public Hearing has been scheduled as follows:

- 6PM – 9PM Tuesday, May 26, 2009; Church of Holy Cross Episcopal (2520 Middle Street)
- Chairman Currey reviewed the proposed format for this meeting, noting that part of the event will include opportunities for members of the public to visit various “stations” in the room to learn about individual Elements and offer feedback.
- Chairman Currey noted that both Council and Planning Commission members are being solicited to “man” the different stations.
- The public will have multiple opportunities and formats in which to offer comments on the Plan during the meeting. The Town will continue to accept comments for a couple of weeks after the public hearing ends.

Commission members noted that, although the Comprehensive Plan is now Town Council’s document and specific public concerns should be addressed to Council directly, they felt it was helpful to assist with educating the public on the Elements in the Plan.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m. (Ms. Geer motioned; Mr. Bluestein seconded).

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Darrow  
Asst. to Administrator

Approved at the Wednesday, June 10, 2009 Regular Planning Commission Meeting