

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN’S ISLAND
SOUTH CAROLINA
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 12, 2014**

A regular meeting of the Town of Sullivan’s Island Planning Commission was held at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 12, 2014 at Town Hall, 2050-B Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Commission members Garry Visser (Chair); Vice-Chair Hal Currey; Rusty Bennett, Sydney Cook, Carl Hubbard, Carlsen Huey and Manda Poletti. Staff members present: Zoning Administrator Henderson and Asst. to Administrator Darrow. Absent: Building Official Robinson (excused, work related conflict).

I. Call to Order. Chair Visser called the meeting to order, stated press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and noted all Commission members were present. No media; approximately nine members of the public present.

II. Approval of Agenda

Chair Visser noted the agenda will be recommended for amendment to remove text amendment #1 (pending decision by State Ethics Commission on standing of Commissioner Bennett to participate in discussion/vote on eating establishments in the Community Commercial District) and to place Item D(2), Battery to Beach, as the first item for Commission’s consideration.

MOTION: Mr. Bennett moved to approve the March 12, 2014 agenda, amended to remove the following item: Café’s and Food Service Establishments. Review of text amendments that would allow café uses and define other food service establishments within the Community Commercial Zoning District. Proposed are Zoning Ordinance text amendments to Section 21-203, “Definitions;” Section 21-50A(1)(B), “Permitted Uses;” Section 21-50B(1) “Conditional Uses;” Section 21-50C(1), “Special Exceptions;” Section 21-50D(1) “Prohibited Uses.” Further, to re-order business such that the Battery to the Beach topic is considered first by the Commission. Seconded by Ms. Poletti; MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

Chair Visser noted the topic would be retained on the April Planning Commission agenda in anticipation that the Ethics Commission would offer a ruling by/before that meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Huey moved to approve the January 8, 2014 minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Currey. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.
No meeting in February (weather cancellation)

IV. Correspondence & General Public Comments – None

V. Text Amendments

1. Text Amendment, Zoning Ordinance - Discussion

Café's and Food Service Establishments: Review of text amendments that would allow café uses and define other food service establishments within the Community Commercial Zoning District. Proposed are Zoning Ordinance text amendments to Section 21-203, "Definitions;" Section 21-50A(1)(B), "Permitted Uses;" Section 21-50B(1) "Conditional Uses;" Section 21-50C(1), "Special Exceptions;" Section 21-50D(1) "Prohibited Uses."

MOTION: Vice-Chair Currey made a motion to defer this topic until March 2014, pending the SC Ethics Commission's ruling related to a potential conflict of interest for Commissioner Bennett that would preclude him from discussion, debate and voting on this topic. Seconded by Ms. Cook.
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

VI. Items for Consideration

1. **Battery to Beach:** Battery to Beach project update and review of staff implementation strategy for signage along approved route.

- Pat Sullivan with Charleston Moves (local, non-profit bicycle advocacy group) provided additional background on this organization, its role in the Battery to the Beach (B2B) project and the B2B project in general. Completed project will:
 - Provide bicycle and pedestrian access to/from downtown Charleston to local beaches.
 - B2B will be 32 miles long from end-end.
 - Cost-benefit studies have identified potential \$40million in tourist revenue from B2B.
 - Signs identifying B2B routes will be posted only for roads deemed satisfactorily safe by transportation engineering standards (level of service C minimum).
 - Riders would identify B2B route by unique B2B logo (will be on marketing material too).
- Zoning Administrator Henderson reviewed Staff recommendations for Sullivan's Island portion of B2B trail.
 - Staff developed trail which would be as safe as possible for recreational bikers of all ages while being scenic. Administration Staff endorse this route:
 - **Entering Town from Ben Sawyer Bridge and exiting from Breach Inlet Bridge:**
 - **Proceed on Causeway/Hwy703 to Jasper Boulevard**
 - **Right on Jasper Boulevard to Station 22**
 - **Left onto Station 22 to Atlantic Avenue (use marked crosswalk for Middle Street)**

- **Left on Atlantic Avenue to Station 28**
- **Right onto Station 28, proceed to merge with Marshall Boulevard**
- **Proceed Marshall Boulevard to Station 32**
- **Left Station 32 to Middle Street**
- **Right Middle Street to Jasper Boulevard intersection**
- **Right onto Jasper Boulevard exiting Town to Isle of Palms over Breach Inlet bridge**

- Staff recommends the Town follow Mt. Pleasant's lead on signage: incorporate B2B logo onto existing road signs whenever possible.
- Noted the bike path along Jasper Boulevard would remain, but B2B would encourage families and less experienced bikers to use the aforementioned route along Atlantic Avenue.
- Status: Town asks Commission to provide Town Council a recommendation on the proposed route. Should Council approve the route, the next steps would be the filing of encroachment permits with the SCDOT for signage.

Commission discussion and public input was given on the route. Commission suggestions:

- Consider two B2B paths for the Island:
 - Staff recommended path through the Town for those entering from Mt. Pleasant and
 - Second path for B2B bikers entering Town from Isle of Palms: proceeding down Jasper Boulevard and traveling portions of Goldbug Avenue and Myrtle Avenue, exiting onto Causeway/Hwy703 by a right turn off Myrtle Avenue (safer and different scenery)
- Study potential turn onto Myrtle Avenue instead of Jasper Boulevard for bikers entering Town from Mt. Pleasant on Staff endorsed route (shorten time spent on Hwy 703).

Public Comments

Brett Bluestein (2213 Myrtle Avenue, Sullivan's Island, SC)

- Does not support proposal to route bicyclists through Myrtle Avenue (short Myrtle) area. Noted this section of Myrtle Avenue is already very busy with automobile traffic traversing the area because Jasper Boulevard will not allow a left turn onto Hwy 703 to exit Island over Ben Sawyer Bridge/causeway.

Heidi Brown (405 Station 22 Street, Sullivan's Island, SC)

- Concurs with Mr. Bluestein; there has been significant increases in vehicular traffic diverted to Myrtle Avenue area due to Jasper left turn lane restriction to Hwy 703.
- Questioned the reasoning and value of routing pedestrians and bicyclists through the area. Recommended using designated bicycle paths that already exist on Jasper Boulevard and/or diverting bicyclists/pedestrians away from the cemetery and residential area.

- Noted that maintaining the safety of the children at play who live in this area should be the Council's top priority.

Brett Bluestein:

- Recommends Town table this concept of routing bicycle traffic through Myrtle Avenue until a study can be conducted on the impact of vehicular traffic in the area and to determine whether Jasper Boulevard should be opened to allow left-turn traffic onto Hwy 703.

Paul Boehm (3209 Middle Street, Sullivan's Island)

- Suggested a different route from Isle of Palms through Sullivan's Island to Mt. Pleasant with B2B bikers routed down Jasper Boulevard, right onto Myrtle Avenue/Gull Drive and then right onto Hwy703 to Ben Sawyer Bridge.
- Noted this would encourage bicyclists to take a different return route when entering the Island from Isle of Palms, create a safer right turn onto Ben Sawyer Boulevard Causeway and avoid bicyclists traversing Myrtle Avenue when exiting the Island.

MOTION: Mr. Huey made a motion that Commission endorse the concept of Battery to Beach (B2B) and recommend to Council the Staff suggested B2B bicycle route with additional study and consideration to use the Myrtle Avenue turn from Hwy 703 instead of Jasper Boulevard. Seconded by Ms. Cook.

Discussion:

Mr. Bennett noted he likes Mr. Boehm's suggestion for a second/different B2B route for cyclists coming on-Island from Isle of Palms.

Commission clarified that the existing B2B route has cyclists entering from Mt. Pleasant to Sullivan's Island via Jasper Boulevard.

MOTION PASSED SIX (6) TO ONE (1) (Bennett voted nay).

2. Bike Path and Marsh walk at Patriot Street (November-present)

Planning Commission continued discussion regarding the feasibility of constructing a bike path or marsh walk to provide pedestrian access from Ben Sawyer Boulevard to Patriot Street or Station 22 termination.

Staff report/background:

- Study concept initiated at November meeting
- Bicycle/pedestrian path would begin at entrance to Sullivan's Island on Ben Sawyer Boulevard and traverse by boardwalk over small marsh area.
- Two options for boardwalk route to connect with Sullivan's Island roads:
 - At Patriot Street termination;
 - Run via cemetery property adjacent to marsh and continue to Station 22.
- Noted there was discussion about running path through the rear of Stith Park (Staff reviewed conceptual maps).

- Potential benefits include (noted in previous meetings):
 - Path would provide safe ingress/egress to the Island for pedestrian and non-motorized vehicles.
 - Provides an opportunity for the Town to improve/enhance the current entrance area to the Island (monument sign).
 - Provides an opportunity to incorporate landscape and other traffic calming devices at the Town's entrance that would encourage slower vehicle speeds and increase awareness of pedestrians/bicyclists coming onto/off of the Island.
- Would be part of the East Coast Greenway plan.

Regulatory and inter-governmental approval considerations:

- Town Council would need to approve any infrastructure projects;
- Neighboring resident and community input would be solicited as part of the Council's decision making process;
- Town zoning restrictions do not allow for privately owned docks to be constructed in the marsh area from St 18-27 in the RC-2 district;
- Would require encroachment permits from US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), and OCRM/DHEC.
- OCRM/DHEC has done a cursory informal review of concept/sketch and offered the following initial feedback:
 - No obvious water dependent amenity/public interest was identified for the boardwalk. OCRM/DHEC deemed this problematic.
 - Staff interpreted this comment as follows: water dependent public interest means a destination over the boardwalk instead of a connection trail only. A fishing dock on the water would be an example of a water dependent public interest. Currently the trail connects one upland parcel with another upland parcel for the means of transporting traffic only.

Path specifications discussed at earlier meetings (for reference):

- Two-way path approximately 6-9 feet in width;
- No specified hours of operation at present;
- Lighting – undetermined
- Bicyclists and pedestrians only – no golf carts or motorcycles
- New Town Hall/Police Station – need to incorporate anticipated footprint on Town campus for path design
- Funding for initial path construction; funding for ongoing maintenance (Park foundation or establish a non-profit?)
- DOT and other agency approval/permitting for path.

Committee Discussion:

Mr. Huey clarified for the public that this concept originated within the Planning Commission as a means to provide bicyclists and pedestrians a safer route to access the west end of the Island and beachfront instead of going into the Community Commercial District.

Vice-Chair Currey noted that the Town would need to modify the Zoning Ordinance to allow for construction of a municipal dock in this RC-2 area. Ms. Poletti noted that the Town would need to get approval through OCRM before approaching the Town with a request to consider a municipal dock in this RC-2 area.

Ms. Cook questioned, should the B2B route be accepted by the Town, whether this initiative would be duplicative. Chair Visser replied that the casual bicycle traffic onto the beach will increase as the Causeway/Hwy 703 bike/pedestrian path improves. He submitted there is value in providing an additional path to directly access the Town Park, beach area and get access to public facilities (water fountains and toilets) without traversing the vehicle traffic congested area along Station 22 ½ and the Community Commercial District. He submits there is justification to consider multiple paths.

Next Steps:

Retain item on Commission's April agenda with the following follow-up/study:

- Staff speak with OCRM/DHEC regarding design options that might comply with the agency's regulations;
- Obtain a legal opinion on whether a public dock between St 18-27 (RC-2 area) would require a Zoning Ordinance change;
- Depending upon the Town Attorney's opinion, Planning Commission address consequences/benefits of modifying the Zoning Ordinance to allow for public dock in this area of the RC-2 district.

Chair Visser welcomed members of the public present to offer comments on this concept.

Public Comments

Dennis Kabinski (418 Patriot Street, Sullivan's Island)

- Indicated he was present to speak on behalf of his neighborhood;
- In his opinion, the legal modifications appear to be significant to create a path that would be acceptable to all regulatory and government agencies;
- Questioned whether the benefits of creating the path would be worth the effort and potential expense required, given that the path would only avoid a very small segment of Ben Sawyer Causeway/Hwy 703/Station 22 ½ ;
- In his opinion, the most treacherous part of accessing the Island is traversing the Ben Sawyer Bridge with automobiles.
- None of the neighbors want this path.

Christine Kabinski (418 Patriot Street, Sullivan's Island)

- Her original question was the purpose of the path.
 - What is the point of this path for a short distance?
 - Questioned necessity of path.
- Wants to retain clean, clutter free vista of the marsh from Ben Sawyer Boulevard and the Causeway (no boardwalk with gazebo).

Heidi Brown (405 Station 22 Street, Sullivan's Island, SC)

- Reiterated comments made by Kabinski;

- Requested Council and Commission consider, in this situation, the needs and desires of the Island residents as opposed to tourists and Community Commercial District.
- Opined a lot of discussion has occurred tonight, for example, on ways to accommodate and incentivize additional tourists onto the Island. These efforts would be done to the detriment of the neighbors in this area.

•
 Chuck Galis (1817 Back Street, Sullivan’s Island)

- Noted he was originally present to listen to discussion about the café eating establishments;
- Concurred with comments offered by Ms. Brown;
- Noted he and his wife came to the Island 25 years ago, being able to move full-time on the Island 8 years ago. Noted we came to the Island for what it was and is, not for what the Town could make it in terms of tourism.
- Observed he is hearing discussion about means to incentivize more tourist traffic and the neighborhoods are the areas that would be impacted.
- Commented that he and his wife observed, years ago, how incredibly quiet the Island was at night. Noted the quiet and tranquility is eroding.
- Important consideration: every time the Town makes concessions/changes, the residents are giving up a little bit of the quality that we all cherish on this Island.
- Sometimes one can want to fix something that really does not need to be fixed.

Jeff Patterson (2114 I’On Avenue, Sullivan’s Island)

- Owns the Co-Op; arrived late and asked about the eating establishment discussion.
- Regarding the topic in question, he noted he used to live on Myrtle Avenue and indicated he is familiar with the comments about noise.

Commission will continue this item on the April agenda.

3. Planning Commission Rules of Procedure: Building Department Staff requests the Commission’s review of the *Planning Commission Rules of Procedure* and provided supplemental reading on Rosenberg’s Rules of Order

MOTION: Mr. Huey made a motion to reaffirm the Commission’s Rules of Procedure; seconded by Mr. Hubbard. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

VII. Staff Update on Town Projects

- a. **Sullivan’s Island Elementary School – selecting colors**
- b. **Bicycle Friendly Community Designation – Bicycle Committee**
 - Mr. Huey chairs Bicycle Committee; will initiate an application to submit for Bicycle Friendly Community designation;
 - Mr. Huey will seek graduate student(s)/interns to assist with establishing a Master Bicycle Plan to bring to the Town.

c. Town Hall, Police Station and Park Improvement project

Council has asked several local architects and members of the Design Review Board to give design input to the Public Facilities Committee of Council and Town retained Architect: Steve Herlong, Pat Ilderton, Duke Wright, Ed Fava and Hill Construction. Creech & Associates continues to be the design lead/Town consultant on this design project.

Next meeting of Public Facilities Committee will be 8:30AM on March 25, 2014.

d. Housekeeping: Town Project Tracking Program

Staff will initiate a tracking program for Planning Commission efforts, tying the programs to Comprehensive Plan elements. This tracking document would be forwarded to the respective committees of Town Council.

Benefits: create and preserve institutional knowledge, facilitate sharing of information between Commission and Council, prevent duplication of effort and facilitate future Comprehensive Plan updates. The program would benefit all Town committees and departments.

There was general Commission consensus that the project tracking program was a good idea and should be implemented by Staff.

Next Meeting – (6:30pm) Wednesday, April 9, 2014 at Town Hall

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:20p.m. (Mr. Currey motioned; Mr. Bennett seconded; unanimously passed).

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Darrow
Asst. to Administrator

Approved at the Wednesday, April 9, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting