



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Board of Zoning Appeals
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 12, 2025**

A Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting was held on the above date at 4:00 p.m., all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied.

Present were:

Elizabeth Tezza, Chair
James Elliott, Board Member
Arthur Hanlon, Board Member
Michael Scruggs, Board Member

Charles Drayton, Director of Planning and Zoning
Rebecca Fanning, Director of Resilience and Natural Resource Management
Bridget Welch, Staff Member

I. Freedom of Information Act Requirements

Chair Elizabeth Tezza called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and stated the press and public had been notified in accordance with State Law. There were over thirty (30) members of the public present and no members of the media present.

II. Approval of Minutes-May 8, 2025

Motion was made by James Elliott, seconded by Arthur Hanlon, to approve the Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting Minutes of May 8, 2025, passed unanimously.

III. Variance Request

1. **1204 Middle Street (Application):** ee fava architects, applicant, is requesting variances from §21-20 C (3)(a) – to allow 2 buildings on one lot, §21-25 B – to increase the principal building coverage on the lot beyond the maximum allowable, §21-26 B – to allow the impervious coverage beyond the maximum, §21-27 B – to increase the principal building square footage beyond the maximum allowable, and §21-20 (3)(f)& 21-22 (C)(1 & 3) – to reduce the required side yard setback and

eliminate the side façade requirements, to replace the existing parish hall on Stella Maris Church Campus, in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance §21-179. (PIN# 523-07-00-0058).

Charles Drayton presented for staff, providing background, photos, and further details about the variance request. The proposed new parish hall will be 4,750 square feet larger than the existing one, which is primarily for circulation, accessibility, and other safety reasons. The existing hall is already non-conforming for the RS-1 district location. Mr. Drayton reviewed the language and requirements of zoning ordinance §21-179, as well as religious institution use regulations. Reviewing the hardship requirements and how this request meets them, staff recommended approval.

Eddie Fava then presented for the applicant and introduced others that are working on the project – Joel Trantham, Michael Strople, and Jared Raskin. Mr. Fava reviewed the request and provided some background and photos, including comparisons of the new and old buildings. Mr. Strople then spoke about reducing the square feet of the building after requested from the Board, offering a more in-depth comparison of the old building and the proposed plans. Mr. Trantham presented a graphic comparing the two as well as explaining some of the code requirements that necessitate a larger building. He also refuted the statement that this would be the largest building on the Island, providing multiple examples of larger buildings. Mr. Fava spoke again, commenting on interactions and meetings with members of the neighborhood, as well as potential parking lot designs, which will ultimately be decided by SC DOT. He stated they removed 1,000 square feet from the design presented at the last meeting. He then took questions from the Board.

Chair Tezza explained the commenting proceedings for the evening.

Public Comment:

In Favor:

- Chris Young, 402 Station 12 Street
- Larry Kobrowsky, 402 Seabreeze Lane
- Charlie Condon, 835 Middle Street
- Joe Bustos, 649 King Street, Mount Pleasant
- Michael Molony,

Opposed:

- Neil Garfinkle, 1001 Middle Street

Father Lawrence McInerny of Stella Maris closed the public comments by addressing some concerns that have been brought to him at meetings and by neighbors.

The Board then had discussions amongst themselves and asked a few questions of Mr. Drayton and Father McInerny.

Chair Tezza passed the Chair to make a motion.

Motion was made by Elizabeth Tezza, seconded by Michael Scruggs, to approve the variance request in its entirety, based on our findings in §21-179 there are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property as this is and has been a religious use prior to the establishment of the Town's Zoning Ordinance; these conditions do not generally apply to other property in the vicinity because only the other church parcels have this distinction; because of these conditions, the application of the ordinance to the particular piece of property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property because without approval of these variances, the existing parish hall would continue to deteriorate and would remain nonconforming to the RS District standards; in addition the improvements in the nonconforming setbacks and impervious coverage will enhance the neighborhood compatibility and increased massing and coverage are countered by the majority of the massing's location closer to the adjacent commercial, governmental use of the Fort Moultrie Visitor's Center and the increase in principal building coverage and square footage are both offset by the important reduction in impervious coverage, which will allow the larger building to better address stormwater concerns in the area than the existing smaller building with its asphalt parking lot, and also it will improve accessibility and bathroom facilities as those are the main drivers of the increase in size, which will enhance public safety and provide a more accommodating space for patrons, especially those with special needs; therefore the fourth point is authorization of a variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or to the public good, and the granting of the variance will not harm the character of the district, the proposal would enhance the visual appeal of the property, would improve on nonconformities that detract from the neighborhood compatibility, and would improve the handling of stormwater on the property all to the benefit of neighboring properties, passed unanimously.

2. **1010 Osceola Avenue (Application):** Mary Murray Muller, applicant, is requesting variances from §21-13, to allow the importation of fill materials onto the lot, increasing lot elevations by more than 1 foot above the existing grades, and from §21-139 B. (2) & (3), to allow a fence made of materials other than wood or metal and to allow a fence without any openings across its plane. (PIN#523-06-00-003).
3. **1018 Osceola Avenue (Application):** Robert Brandon Aebersold, applicant, is requesting a variance from §21-13, to allow the importation of fill materials onto the lot, increasing lot elevations by more than 1 foot above the existing grades, and from §21-139 B. (2) & (3), to allow a fence made of materials other than wood or metal and to allow a fence without any openings across its plane. (PIN# 0523-06-00-002).

With Items #2 & #3 being taken up together for consideration, Mr. Drayton presented on behalf of the Town, providing background and photos for the two properties.

Rebecca Fanning then provided information regarding the parcels in question. She stated the mean elevation for these two properties, along with many surrounding properties, are quite low. She spoke about the Town's Stormwater Master Plan and what it means for the future of these properties. Mr. Drayton provided more information about the applications and provided the plans

that were approved and stated staff had not seen the proposed plans prior to them applying for this variance. The proposed plans have not been approved for permits. Mr. Drayton's recommendation is to not approve the variances because they do not meet all four of the conditions required to approve the variance. They do not feel the zoning ordinance will effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property. Both properties have been used for multiple years, each with homes on them. It is also possible that it will be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or the public good. Furthermore, data provided by Seamon & Whiteside shows raising the elevation of the lot will not have a substantial effect on the area's flooding issues. They both took questions from the Board.

Jay Harper then presented as the contractor for the new construction at 1018 Osceola Avenue. He stated after demolishing the previous home on the lot they discovered major tidal flooding issues. He also provided some background for the request. Kevin Herren from Seamon & Whiteside then spoke about the flooding issues for the 1010 Osceola and provided their recommendation of building a seawall as the best way to prevent tidal flooding for the property. He then spoke about the flooding issues at 1018 Osceola and the reasons for their request. He mentioned the recommendations and input from the resiliency team multiple times. It was clarified that said team were consultants and did not include any Town staff. He then took questions from the Board. The Board also questioned Town staff, and further discussions were held among all parties. Chair Tezza stated she is in favor of tabling the request to allow the applicant further discussion and review with Town staff.

Motion was made by James Elliott, seconded by Elizabeth Tezza to table the variance request for 1010 Osceola Avenue and 1018 Osceola Avenue to give the applicants time to have further discussions with the Town and bring it back in July, passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Dean Kilpatrick, 1026 Osceola Ave – feels these two addresses do need some help in regard to flood mitigation and would like to be included in future proposal discussions.

Special Exception Request – Historic Accessory Dwelling Unit

4. **1914 Central Avenue (Application):** Amber Aument, applicant, requests approval of a special exception for the historic structure on the property to be used as an accessory dwelling unit, in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance Sections Section §21-20 C. (2) & §21-178. (PIN# 529-05-00-058) (Supporting documentation).

Mr. Drayton provided a staff presentation with background and details on the request. He stated this cottage was recently added to the historic registry. Staff recommends approval of the special exception according to DRB's conceptual approval, provided the Board makes findings of fact that the project complies with the standards for granting special exceptions, found in §21-178.

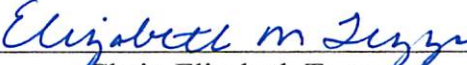
Amber Aument then presented as the applicant, providing more information regarding the historic cottage, stating it is being added to historic registry once all non-historic additions are removed. Chair Tezza voiced her support for the proposal.

Motion was made by James Elliott, seconded by Michael Scruggs, to grant the applicant's request for approval of the special exception for the historic structure on the property to be used as an accessory dwelling unit in accordance with the zoning ordinance §21-20 (C) and §21-178 in that we found that there is adequate provisions made for items such as setbacks, fences, and buffered or planting strips to project adjacent properties from possible adverse influence of the proposed use, such as noise, vibration, dust, glare, odor, traffic congestion, and similar factors; number two, that vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement on adjacent roads shall not be hindered or endangered; three, that off-street parking and loading areas and the entrance and exits of these areas shall be adequate in terms of location, amount, design, and construction to serve the proposed use, and four, that the proposed use shall be compatible with existing uses to the extent that such use will not adversely affect the level of property values, general character, or general welfare of the nearby area, passed unanimously.

IV. Adjourn

Chair Tezza adjourned the Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bridget Welch
Board of Zoning Appeals Staff


Chair, Elizabeth Tezza