



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

A regular meeting was held at 5:00pm, on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, in Town Hall at 2056 Middle Street. All requirements of the Freedom of Information Act were verified to have been satisfied.

Present: Commissioners Carl Hubbard (Chair), Manda Poletti (Vice Chair), Charles Cole, Mark Howard, Gallia Coles, David Peterseim and Laura Schroeder.

Staff Members: Charles Drayton, Director of Planning and Zoning, Joe Henderson, Deputy Administrator, and Pamela Otto, Planning Commission staff member.

- A. **Call to Order.** Chair Hubbard called the meeting to order at 5:00pm, and it was stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act requirements. There were no members of the public present and no members of the media present.
- B. **Approval of Minutes – April 13, 2022**
Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Poletti to approve the March 9, 2022 meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. Schroeder. This motion passed unanimously.
- C. **Items for Consideration**
 1. Commercial District Parking: Review and approval of Planning Commission memorandum to Town Council regarding evaluation of parking in Community Commercial District.

Henderson started by introducing Charles Drayton, his replacement for Planning and Zoning Administrator. He then mentioned the previous memo that the Planning Commission had sent to Town Council, after working on the text amendments for private parking lots, regarding parking in the Commercial District. That memo suggested the review of the 2008 Commercial District Plan and some of the proposed alternative designs in that document.

Henderson then went through the proposed memo and the policies that recommend improving the Commercial District parking, the draft memo is attached as Exhibit A.

Discussion

Ms. Poletti stated that the driveway for the house directly behind Dunleavey's Pub runs right along the back property line, that might affect the plans for that area.

Mr. Peterseim said there was a safety advantage to having that intersection no longer be a four (4) way intersection, there would not be so many pedestrians trying to cross. Henderson mentioned that Town Council was trying to make that intersection right turn only from Station 22.5 onto Middle St. Mr. Howard asked how the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) felt about that. Henderson said the Town had a pending request for that and were waiting for approval.

Ms. Poletti stated that means that all beach traffic would head in that direction. She said Mr. Howard had recommended, when he was on Council, to put up a sign at the intersection of Station 22.5 and Jasper Blvd. that would direct beach traffic to turn left on Jasper for Stations 23 through 32, and the rest of the beach traffic could go forward and make a right on Middle St. She feels that is a good idea and a great way to balance the traffic.

Henderson asked if there were any suggestions to modify the memo before it was sent to Town Council. Mr. Howard wants it to be understood there is an underlying need for infrastructure in that area. He also asked about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) spaces that would be lost if the parking on Middle Street was changed from perpendicular to parallel. Henderson said that by eliminating the perpendicular spaces, you would eliminate those ADA spaces but that there are some ADA spaces on private property. Mr. Peterseim stated that for every ADA space lost from the perpendicular parking, one can be made in the parallel spaces. Mr. Cole mentioned that the 2008 Plan previously mentioned shows the parking area between The Longboard and High Thyme walled in like a courtyard, which would eliminate the ADA spaces on private property as well. Henderson stated that access to that parking area would not be blocked, as it is also a delivery access and is where the Dumpsters are for the businesses. Ms. Schroeder stated that the number of spaces will change and there needs to be a plan to figure out the exact impact.

Mr. Howard said there is a lot of infrastructure that would need to be updated before any actual changes can be made. Henderson agreed, stating that Council would have to consider storm water management and many other factors. Ms. Schroeder stated that a plan would be the next step. Chair Hubbard stated that this matter has not been studied since 2008 and that it is time to discuss a new study. Ms. Poletti stated that the area is very difficult to navigate as a pedestrian and there needs to be a sidewalk.

Henderson asked if the initial bullet for the memo should ask for an update to the Commercial District Plan, eliminating the strategies that don't work. The Commission stated yes. Henderson said it can be added to the agenda for the June Town Council Workshop. He also said it would be helpful if some Planning Commission members could attend this to discuss the memo with Council.

Motion: A motion was made by Chair Hubbard to accept the draft memo as written, with the addition of recommending an update to the strategies discussed in the Community Commercial

District Masterplan of 2008 (CCDM 2008), and to present the memo to Town Council; seconded by Ms. Schroeder. This motion passed unanimously.

D. Public Input and Correspondence. Chair Hubbard mentioned a letter sent to the Planning Commission by Rick Graham about parking in the Commercial District.

Motion: A motion was made by Chair Hubbard to add the letter from Mr. Graham to the record; seconded by Mr. Howard. This motion passed unanimously.

The letter is attached to the minutes as Exhibit B.

Discussion

Mr. Howard said that parent drop off and pick up at the park is a safety issue. He recommended to extend the fifteen (15) minute parking area in front of Town Hall by one space and using the extra space for park pick up and drop off. Henderson said any change to the parking plan is an administrative task, starting with Town Administrator Benke and Fire Chief Stith.

Ms. Poletti stated that it is a good idea but that a space on the street would either not be used or would be full most of the time with parked cars. She suggested maybe have an area behind Town Hall for that. Ms. Schroeder agreed. Henderson said that would be easier after the fire station construction was completed and access to the Town Hall parking lot is open again. Henderson said if the Commission would like, he would reach out to Mr. Graham and tell him the best procedural route for his concern about drop off and pick up at the park, is to speak directly with Administrator Benke. The Commission agreed.

Ms. Schroeder asked about the buffer required for a coffee shop, as mentioned in Mr. Graham's letter. Henderson stated that there is a three hundred (300) foot buffer, required by a condition of the Zoning Ordinance, between coffee shops.

Mr. Cole asked for an update on the Historic Preservation and Design Study Group. Henderson said they have been meeting and trying to determine if the Ordinances are protecting the Island's built environment. He said they are coming up with a list of recommendations to present to Council by way of the Land Use and Natural Resources (LUNR) Committee, who will then decide if there are any text amendments for the Zoning Ordinance to be sent to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Peterseim asked about the status of the Sand Dunes Club. Henderson stated that it was under contract. He also said that in addition to the main structure, there were 4 buildable lots included in the property.

E. Adjourn. There being no new business, nor further discussion, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:54pm.

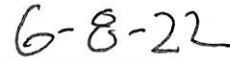
Motion: A motion was made to adjourn by Chair Hubbard; seconded by Mr. Howard. This motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Otto, Planning Commission Staff



Carl Hubbard, Chair



Date



Town of Sullivan's Island

PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

To: Town Council

From: Planning Commission

Public Hearing Date: May 11, 2022

Topic: Commercial District Parking Improvements

BACKGROUND:

During the Planning Commission's March 9, 2022 meeting, a discussion was held regarding the current state of vehicular parking within the Town's commercial district. The Commission identified the existing perpendicular parking arrangement along Middle Street between Station 22 and Station 22 ½ Street to be a growing safety concern for pedestrians and other vehicular traffic.

This issue was made an official agenda item during the Commission's April 13, 2022 meeting where several policies of the *Town's Comprehensive Plan 2018-2028* were identified supporting these commercial district parking improvements.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY 6: ADDRESS COMMUNITY PARKING NEEDS		
T 6.1 Examine parking management solutions for Middle Street for the entire community commercial district	Town Administration	Ongoing
LAND USE POLICY 3: BALANCE THE VIABILITY OF THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT WITH THE RESIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE ISLAND.		
LU 3.1 Support implementation of the Community Commercial District Masterplan that addresses concerns such as on-street parking, street trees, design, landscaping, site placement of structures and parking.	Town Council, Administration	Ongoing
ECONOMIC POLICY 2: REVISIT THE COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT MASTER PLAN		
E 2.1 Update the plan when needed	Town Administration	Long-term
E 2.2 Re-evaluate parking within the community commercial district	Town Administration	Ongoing

In pursuit of the above Transportation, Land Use and Economic policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission endorses the reexamination of possible parking management solutions outlined in the previously drafted for the *Community Commercial District Masterplan of 2008 (CCDM 2008)*. A key recommendation of this plan was geared to reconfiguring the existing twenty-five (25) perpendicular parking spaces along Middle Street, between Station 22 Street and Station 22 ½ Street.

Suggestions included working collaboratively with property owners and South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to remove these perpendicular spaces to construct safe and compliant parking options within the Commercial District while maintaining compliant ADA parking spaces (i.e., providing van accessible spaces, ramps, detectible warnings, curbing, etc.).

The Planning Commission also recommended the following considerations be made:

- Continue allowing parallel parking along Middle Street and throughout the Commercial District. Convert existing 25 perpendicular spaces to a parallel configuration to allow sidewalks and safe pedestrian access from intersections.
- Continue endorsing development of privately run short-term auto parking lots for the Commercial District authorized by Zoning Ordinance, §21-50 C. (4).
- Continue providing, and exploring, other public parking options on Town owned properties.
- Consider conversion of Station 22 ½ (between Middle and I'On), to enable additional parking for cars and golf carts to offset any loss in the conversion of spots on Middle Street from perpendicular to parallel. (See page 30-31 of CCDM)

Respectfully submitted,

Carl B. Hubbard, Chair

Date

Manda Poletti, Vice Chair

Date

Dear Planning Commission Members,

5/9/2022

I'm glad the PC has an interest in finding parking solutions. There's been an incredible amount of time spent on parking issues. Unfortunately some past Town Council members played games with parking as a political tool and obstruction to commercial development.

Before and around the Cooper Consulting time frame parking was a hot topic. There were actually meaningful parking requirements in place and a common question was why the Town wasn't enforcing them. Obvious to some was also a circular pattern between Town Council and the Planning Commission of constantly studying and sending to council parking related issues only to have them sent back to PC over and over again. I remember one commercial land owner asking why everything keeps coming back to parking at a PC meeting and two members looked at each other and joked "sometimes there's an art to doing nothing".

Fortunately only one member remains on council from that time and hopefully a lesson has been learned about the "art of doing nothing". We have a congested mess and the historic Battery Thomson is being abused because of TC parking failures. The residents around Battery Thomson are also paying a heavy price with all the extra traffic and noise created having a Commercial District parking lot in a residential area. I don't think Ion Avenue is the right place to provide parking for establishments serving so much alcohol and that's exactly what it is after a certain time of day.

Some changes I think would improve parking conditions are eliminating the 300 foot buffer requirement between "Coffee Shops", eliminating angle parking on Middle Street, removing the BZA requirement for private parking lots, and a drop off/pick up location for Stith Park.

The 300 foot buffer requirement eliminates several lots from the Coffee Shop use even though they have plenty of room for parking. The existing shops don't meet any reasonable parking requirements and hold visitors longer adding to parking problems. Some simple changes would allow reasonable "Coffee Shop" uses without them becoming miniature restaurants while also adding parking.

The angle parking along Middle Street is obviously dangerous and can be made up for elsewhere. Some cars are there all day and I don't think there would be any harm to existing establishments as long as additional nearby parking is available.

The BZA recently approved a parking lot on Middle Street and I'm thankful they did. However, I think TC and PC should write a parking lot ordinance which address's concerns and be consistent among all applicants for a parking lot permit. Membership can change too often on the BZA and different members over time may have very different ideas.

A drop off and pick up for Stith Park is another safety issue and its ridiculous we don't have one already. I see cars stop in the middle of the road all the time dropping and picking up kids at the park.

Good luck, you're gonna need it to get anything meaningful done.

Respectfully,
Richard Graham
2102 Ion Ave.