



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

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

A regular meeting was held at 4:00 p.m., on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, in Town Hall at 2056 Middle Street. All requirements of the Freedom of Information Act were verified to have been satisfied.

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

Staff Members: Joe Henderson, Deputy Administrator and Pamela Otto, Planning Commission staff member.

A. Call to Order. Chair Poletti called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m., and it was stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act requirements.

Public: There were seven (7) members of the public present, including Historic Preservation and Design Study Group (HPDSG) members Elizabeth Tezza, Rita Langley, Aussie Geer, and John Winchester.

Media: There were no members of the media present.

B. Approval of Minutes – May 10, 2023

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Schroeder to approve the May 10, 2023 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Ms. Coles; there was no vote on this motion.

C. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments

- 1) Consideration of changes to Section 21-27 C. (1) – Regarding changes to the discretionary increases for principal building square footage (PBSF) that the Design Review Board (DRB) may offer for new construction.

Henderson summarized why there was a need to discuss this, as there was a recommendation by the HPDSG to reduce DRB discretionary increases for Principal Building Square Footage from 25% to 10%. Although the Commission discussed various

options for adjusting these discretionary increases, this particular item was never formally placed on a Planning Commission Agenda. He then went through the process for considering the HPDSG recommendations and their path of review by the Land Use and Natural Resources Committee (LUNR) and Town Council. He then summarized the sections that cover Principal Building Square Footage and how the Town controls the size of homes, that have been covered so far.

- §21-20 B. Covers attached additions, attached by non-heated or cooled space. The HPDSG did not forward a recommendation on this. The Planning Commission decided to limit the DRB increase to twenty percent (20%)
- §21-20 C. Historic Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) incentives, the HPDSG recommended to create a DRB incentive for maintaining historic structures as ADUs by allowing the new construction on the property a DRB increase of twenty percent (20%) in PBSF. The Commission decided on a 25% increase for PBSQ as well as a 20% increase to principal building coverage
- §21-43 B. Both the HPDSG and the Commission decided to eliminate the 50% historic exemption and reducing the DRB increase of PBSQ for historic additions from 25% to 20%
- §21-27 C. The HPDSG recommended reducing the DRB increase for PBSF in new construction from 25% to 10%.

§21-27 C is the final recommendation under consideration as the Planning Commission had not yet formally voted on this provision. Henderson gave some scenarios that showed how changes in discretionary increases would affect new construction on various lot sizes.

It was asked how many three quarters of an acre lots there were on the island; Henderson was not sure of the exact number but stated there were very few lots that were this large. He reported that most of the lots are half-acre or quarter-acre lots.

It was asked if a garage counted toward the PBSF; Henderson stated that if there was conditioned space above the garage, then it would count against the PBSF allowed on a lot.

D. Public Hearing for Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments

- 1) Principal Building Square Footage, Zoning Ordinance Subsection §21-27 C. (1): Consideration to reduce the discretionary increases in principal building square footage for new construction.

Public Comments

Summer Eudy (1301 Thompson) stated she believes the work done by the study group was great. She feels that reducing the DRB discretionary increase to 10% is too harsh, as it will penalize smaller lots more than larger. She feels it would affect property values.

It was asked what percentage she would recommend. Ms. Eudy feels that 10% is fine for a larger lot but it should be 20% at least for smaller lots.

John Winchester (2720 Brooks) discussed the HPDSG and their meetings, how they came to the decisions they did. He explained why the group ended up with the 10% limit on the DRB discretionary increase for PBSF and that the consensus was strongly in favor of 10%.

Summer Eudy stated that she was previously on the DRB and that incentives are important for conservation. She said you can't compare properties with historic structures to those without historic structures.

Discussion

Ms. Poletti had Henderson bring up a slide showing the DRB Summary Data from 2013 to 2023. Henderson went through the graph showing the increases in PBSF averaged around sixteen percent (16%) over this ten-year period. He also stated that PB coverage area (PBCA) averaged around ten percent (10%) over this same ten-year period but increased to twelve percent (12%) in 2023 with the new DRB encouraging larger building footprints to be more spread out on the lot with lower massing. He also showed a graph illustrating that over the ten (10) year period, the average PBSF is four thousand two hundred fifteen (4,215) square feet (sf). For the same time period, the PBCA averaged two thousand seven hundred seventy-one (2,771) sf.

Henderson then discussed DRB percentage increase averages by request type from February 2022 to February 2023;

New Construction	15.6%
Addition	11.4%
Historic Addition	8.6%

Ms. Poletti stated that she had been a member of the HPDSG and she remembered all of the discussion around making the increase 10% or 20%. She said the Commission had felt that those using the ADU exception needed the largest incentive.

Mr. Peterseim stated that compromise is necessary in order to come to a consensus. A decision would need to be made taking all residents into consideration.

Ms. Schroeder stated that the DRB granted increases average is around 15%. Henderson asked that the Commission keep in mind that the averages were not broken down according to lot size.

Mr. Peterseim said there was no need to rush this process, he would like to see more data from staff breaking the information down by lot size, before he decides. Ms. Schroeder agreed, saying the small island feel needed to be maintained while still allowing people

the space needed for their home, she feels like going from 25% to 10% is a big jump. She feels a different standard might be needed for different size lots.

Henderson stated that staff could go back through all the DRB application data to parse out lot size in addition to the other relevant data. He also said that the current Zoning Ordinance does take lot size into consideration. Lots smaller than fifteen thousand (15,000) sf have an equation applied that allows a slight increase to the PB coverage and impervious coverage.

Ms. Poletti stated that the houses on smaller lots are going to be smaller and are not quite the concern that new construction on the large lots are, those houses tend to be more massive. Mr. Peterseim agreed, stating that each person's perspective on what they think is best might not be best for someone else. Ms. Poletti asked if all were in agreement to ask staff to gather the requested information for the consideration of the Commission before a final decision is made.

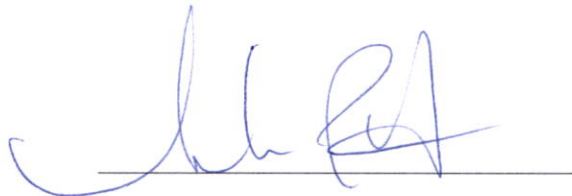
Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Peterseim to defer the decision to lower the DRB discretionary increase for Principal Building Square Footage in new construction, and defer the public hearing until more data on how it would impact different homes on different lot sizes can be presented by staff, seconded by Ms. Coles; this motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

E. Adjourn. There being no new business, nor further discussion, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:46pm.

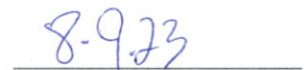
Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Peterseim to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Schroeder; this motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Otto, Planning Commission Staff



Manda Poletti, Chair



Date