

**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

A regular meeting was held at 6:00 PM, this date, VIA Zoom, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act satisfied. Present: Commissioners Gary Visser (Chair), Sydney Cook (Vice-Chair), Charlie Cole, Carl Hubbard, and Manda Poletti.

Staff members: Joe Henderson, Director of Planning, Randy Robinson, Building Official and Pamela Otto, Planning Commission Secretary.

**Call to Order.** Chair Visser called the meeting to order. stated press and public were duly notified pursuant to Freedom of Information Act Requirements and all Commissioners were present except Hal Currey (excused absence) and David Peterseim (excused absence). No public or media present.

**A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – approved as presented**

**B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 12, 2020**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Mr. Cole, seconded by Ms. Poletti, to approve the Planning Commission Minutes dated August 12, 2020. This motion passed unanimously.

**C. PUBLIC INPUT – no written correspondence received**

**D. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Text Amendments to Zoning Ordinance Section 21-31, Foundation Height:** Consideration of Town Council suggestions to text amendments to Section 21-31, Foundation Height regulations within the RS-District for new principal buildings and additions (single family residential district). Henderson recapped the work on this text amendment. The issue was the release of the new FEMA flood maps. Discussion began in January 2019 and was finalized at the May 13, 2020 Planning Commission meeting with a text amendment to be presented to Town Council on September 1, 2020 for their review. Council had feedback to be discussed at this meeting. There will be three readings during Council meetings to have this amendment approved before the release of the new FEMA maps in January of 2021. These maps have the floodplain reducing 4 to 8 feet island wide. The problem with the current ordinance is that it uses the FEMA BFE (base flood elevation) as a reference for how high the foundations can be. New construction would be limited to 5 to 6 feet above ground, limiting parking and access use under homes as well as preventing homes from being built at a safe height. The Commission resolved on May 13, 2020 to accept a text amendment to allow people room to park under their homes, build their homes above storm surge level and meet Comprehensive Plan goals. The second goal of the amendment is to reduce the number of impervious surfaces by the proliferation of garages, as Section 21-26 exempts properties

constructed lower than 6 feet from grade from the impervious surfaces requirement by allowing the construction of detached garages.

The May 13, 2020 Planning Commission Draft of Section 21-31 design standards removed any reference to the FEMA base flood elevation. At the September 9, 2020 Town Council meeting, Council decided to add that the standards outlined in Section 21-31 do not apply to designated historic buildings. Designated historic buildings may not exceed one foot over base flood elevation.

Chair Visser asked Robinson if there is more danger of car fires under a house as opposed to a detached garage. Robinson stated they were probably safer under the house due to enhanced safety features under homes that are elevated.

Chair Visser questioned whether one foot was enough distance between design flood elevation and finished floor elevation, some foundations might need more than one foot. Robinson stated they could go down into the garage space or go to the Design and Review Board for an additional foot of elevation if needed.

There were no other questions from Commission members or the public.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Ms. Poletti to recommend Town Council approval of the text amendments to Section 21-31; seconded by Mr. Cole. This motion passed unanimously.

#### **E. PUBLIC HEARING**

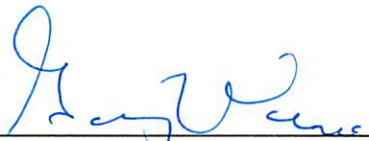
**Text Amendments to Zoning Ordinance Section 21-31, Foundation Height:** Consideration of Town Council suggestions to text amendments to Section 21-31, Foundation Height regulations within the RS-District for new principal buildings and additions (single family residential district). There were no questions or comments from Commission members or the public. The ordinance will move forward to three readings of Council to hopefully be approved by the release of the FEMA flood in January 2021.

**Public Input:** Chair Visser announced the Commission would take any public input on the advertised text amendments. Upon hearing no requests for input, Chair Visser entertained a motion for the text amendments as submitted.

**Motion:** Ms. Poletti made motion to recommend Town Council approval for all text amendments to Section 21-31; seconded by Mr. Cole. This motion passed unanimously.

#### **F. ADJOURN**

A motion was made by Mr. Cole, seconded by Ms. Poletti, to adjourn at 6:31 p.m. This motion passed unanimously.

  
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Gary Visser, Chair

12-9-2020  
Date

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Sydney Cook, Vice Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Otto