



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

**Wednesday, October 12, 2022**

A regular meeting was held at 5:00pm, on Wednesday, October 12, 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), David Peterseim, Mark Howard, Gallia Coles, Charles Cole 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.

**Public:** There were two (2) members of the public present, including John Winchester, chair of the Historic Preservation and Design Study Group.

**Media:** There were no members of the media present.

B. **Approval of Minutes – June 8, 2022**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Mr. Cole to approve the June 8, 2022 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Howard; this motion passed unanimously.

C. **Board Discussion and Approval of Chair and Vicechair.** Chair Hubbard opened the floor for nominations. Mr. Cole nominated Carl Hubbard for Chair, seconded by Mr. Peterseim. There were no other nominations for Chair. The members voted and Chair Hubbard was re-appointed as Planning Commission Chair with a unanimous vote. Ms. Schroeder nominated Ms. Poletti for Vicechair, seconded by Chair Hubbard. There were no other nominations for Vicechair. The members voted and Vicechair Poletti was re-appointed as Planning Commission Vicechair with a unanimous vote.

**Chair: Carl Hubbard**

**Vicechair: Manda Poletti**

D. **Approval of Meeting Calendar for 2023.** Drayton presented the dates for the 2023 Planning Commission meetings, which fall on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Wednesday of every month. Mr. Peterseim asked if the scheduled time of 5:00PM would change. Drayton said it could if that was the will of the members.

**Motion:** A motion was made to approve the 2023 Planning Commission meeting dates by Ms. Poletti, seconded by Ms. Schroeder; this motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:** A motion was made to move the scheduled meeting time for the Planning Commission from 5:00PM to 4:00PM, starting with the next meeting scheduled November 9, 2022, by Ms. Poletti, seconded by Ms. Coles; this motion passed unanimously.

E. **Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments.** Drayton summarized the role of the Historic Preservation and Design Study Group (HPDSG) as specified by the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The HPDSG was formed as a subcommittee of the Land Use and Natural Resources (LUNR) Committee of Council and it met nine (9) times in the spring of 2022. The HPDSG sent their recommendations to the LUNR Committee, who presented them to Town Council. Town Council then sent them to the Planning Commission to determine the changes for the current ordinances. Drayton summarized the ordinances the HPDSG recommended for further study and possible changes that is listed on the agenda for this meeting. The intention of these changes is to reduce massing of homes and to further protect the Town's historic resources.

**§21-20 B. (6)** – Covers attached additions to historic homes. It was found to not do enough to limit the size of the addition, leading to the loss of the historic home into the size of the addition. The HPDSG recommended to do away with any exemptions allowed and it is up to the Planning Commission to see how to best proceed.

**§21-20 C. (2)** – Covers Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), the structures allowed to be built on a property if you leave a historic cottage intact. The HPDSG recommended increasing the discretionary increase allowed by the Design Review Board (DRB) in order to incentivize this option.

There was some discussion about this section and how it is the preferred way to preserve a historic home. It was also asked if there was a size limit for the cottage to use the ADU incentive, Henderson stated that the cottage must be at or below twelve hundred square feet (1200sf) to qualify.

**§21-27 C.** – Covers the allowed discretionary authority of the DRB for new construction square footage increases. The HPDSG recommended reducing this from the current twenty-five percent (25%) to ten percent (10%).

There was some discussion about how most architects design with the intention of this 25% and are not required to give a reason for this increase request, leading to the large massing of homes. Drayton stated that the project still must be approved by the DRB and be shown to be compatible with the neighboring homes.

**§21-43 B.** – Covers historic building attachments. When doing an attached addition to a historic home, this section allows a fifty percent (50%) exemption of the square footage of the existing historic structure, permitting a larger addition. The HPDSG recommended deleting the 50% exemption and lowering the DRB discretionary increase of principal building square footage (PBSF) from 25% to twenty percent (20%).

**§21-44** – Covers the elevation of historic homes. Currently the ordinance requires a historic home's finished floor elevation (FFE) to not exceed one foot over base flood elevation (BFE). The HPDSG recommended increasing that to allow historic homes to be raised more if there is less than eighteen inches (18in) of clearance between the floor framing and finished grade.

**§21-138** – Covers the allowances for accessory structures. The DRB can allow 20% increase in both the square footage and footprint of these structures. The HPDSG recommended that these DRB allowances be eliminated as they are not warranted.

**§21-142** – Covers swimming pools. There were many things discussed by the HPDSG about swimming pools, should they be elevated, should setbacks change to accommodate them, the group asked the Planning Commission to review this ordinance for necessary changes.

Drayton mentioned that the last three (3) items listed on the agenda were the result of staff recommendations, in order to make the ordinances clearer and more succinct. He stated that they are intended to address massing.

**§21-22 B. (4)** – Covers additional front yard setback. Current setback is meant to make sure the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) floor is not a continual wall with the first (1<sup>st</sup>) floor and recesses to minimize the aspect of the structure.

**§21-22 D.** – Covers the principal building side façade setback. Currently allows only a ten foot (10ft) wide wall without some articulation.

Drayton stated this is unreasonable expectation for a structure. It was asked if he had any pictures to aid with review. Drayton then presented some design images to demonstrate.

**§21-29** – Covers principal building front and side façade. This requires a four-foot (4ft) articulation if a wall exceeds thirty feet (30ft).

Drayton stated he understands the intent of the ordinances recommended for change by staff, but that application in the real world of design is cumbersome.

### **Discussion**

There was some discussion of setbacks and how they can lead, by necessity, to elevated pools. It was also asked if changes would affect wind movement, but Drayton did not believe that allowing the pools to be inground would affect the wind corridors. Drayton also mentioned that a garage or cabana only needs to meet a 10ft setback, but a pool must meet a twenty-five-foot (25ft) setback.

Chair Hubbard asked about the best way to move forward with these recommendations. Drayton said he could draft the language for the Commission's review. It was mentioned that the recommendations would best be approached a few at a time, starting with the most important. Drayton said it would be best to discuss the ADU incentives, attached additions and the elevation of historic homes at the same time because they are dependent on each other. It was decided that those three (3) items would be on the agenda for the next Planning Commission meeting. Drayton then directed the members on how to find the information about the HPDSG, their meeting minutes and recommendations are on the Town website.

### **F. Public Input and Correspondence.**

Angie Polk – 1370 Cove Avenue – Stated that the HPDSG meetings were not advertised correctly, not enough were aware that it was all construction not just historic structures. She also felt that families were not well represented among the membership of the study group.

There was some discussion over the general idea preferred by the HPDSG for smaller homes. It was said that the emphasis was not so much that homes needed to be smaller but not so massive, that height lends itself to a more massive appearance. Drayton reiterated that these were only recommendations for the Planning Commission and the Commission could take other input from the public before making any final recommendations.

It was asked if the proposed recommendations applied to all historic properties or only certain ones. Drayton said the members could differentiate due to level of historic value but that it currently is for all properties deemed historic.

The Schneider Study was mentioned in that it is out of date. A new historic property study is going to be done by the Town using grant funds. It was asked if the foreseeable results of that study would be the finding of more or less historic properties. Drayton stated he believed more, as fifteen (15) years have passed since the last survey. It was said that age does not guarantee historic status, it has to meet historic standards. Drayton

says the owner must apply for designation if a property is eligible. The study will just list the properties eligible for historic designaton.

G. **Adjourn.** There being no new business, nor further discussion, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:56pm.

**Motion:** A motion was made to adjourn by Ms. Poletti, seconded by Mr. Howard; this motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Otto, Planning Commission Staff



Carl Hubbard, Chair



Date