

The regular meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") was held on Monday, May 3, 2010, in County Council Chambers, the Beaufort County Administration Building at 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, South Carolina.

Members Present:

Mr. Jim Hicks, Chair	Mr. Robert Semmler, Vice Chair	Mr. Charles Brown
Ms. Mary LeGree	Mr. Ronald Petit	Mr. Edward Riley III
Mr. E. Parker Sutler	Mr. John Thomas	

Members Absent: Ms. Diane Chmelik

Staff Present:

Mr. Anthony Criscitiello, Planning Director
Mr. Brian Herrmann, Community Planner
Ms. Barbara Childs, Admin. Asst. to Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Hicks called the meeting to order at approximately 6:02 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chairman Hicks led those assembled in the Chambers with the pledge of allegiance to the U.S.A. flag.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: The Commission reviewed their April 5, 2010, meeting minutes.
Motion: Mr. Riley made a motion, and Mr. Sutler seconded the motion, **to accept the April 5, 2010, minutes as written.** The motion **was carried** (FOR: Hicks, LeGree, Petit, Riley, Semmler, and Sutler; ABSTAINED: Brown and Thomas).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Hicks welcomed Mr. Charles Brown who will be representing the Sheldon planning area. Mr. Brown was a Beaufort County planning commissioner in the early 1990's. He is filling the seat formerly held by Mr. Frank Mullen.

PUBLIC COMMENT for items other than agenda items: No comment was received.

STATUS OF THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON UNIFIED ORDINANCE OVERHAUL

Mr. Criscitiello introduced Mr. Milt Rhodes, the Town of Bluffton Director of Planning and Environmental Sustainability. Mr. Criscitiello noted the cooperation between Beaufort County and The Town of Bluffton.

Mr. Rhodes introduced himself and summarized his business background.

The Town of Bluffton held a kickoff meeting last week to begin its Unified Ordinance Overhaul. The following consultants were selected: 180 Degrees Urban Design, LSL Planning Inc. (who

assisted with the Town's 2007 Comprehensive Plan update), and Sustainable Settlements with Josh Martin. The consultants will look at the Town's existing ordinance, will hold a charrette from May 12 through May 17, and a draft of new ordinance will be the conclusion of the charrette. The completed draft ordinance is due at the end of July. Seven focus groups are planned—land owners/economic development, commerce, environmental sustainability, public works/utilities, housing, transportation, and planning/administrative/legal. Mr. Criscitiello has been asked to be a member of the Town's steering committee.

Commission discussion included a compliment on the cooperation between Beaufort County and the Town of Bluffton, and a concern on linking the County's and the Town of Bluffton's form-based codes.

Mr. Criscitiello noted that the County's scope of work for their form-based code required linking with the municipalities' form-based codes.

Mr. Rhodes indicated that the charrette key dates were May 12 at 7:00 p.m. in Bluffton Town Hall for an opening presentation and May 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Rotary Community Center in Bluffton for a final presentation. Two open houses are planned for May 14 and May 16, both to be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Seven Oaks Studio in Old Town Bluffton.

OKATIE HEADWATERS DESIGN COMPETITION

Mr. Rhodes noted that his staff wanted to identify ideas, principles and elements for a long-term community building effort for the Okatie Headwaters. He gave a power point presentation regarding the competition including the purpose, a recommendation of the winners, the objectives, general and specific design parameters for the competition, and the reviewers/jury and their review criteria.

Chairman Hicks thanked Mr. Rhodes for his presentations.

TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE BEAUFORT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADDING APPENDIX F, SECTION 7, DAUFUSKIE ISLAND PLAN (ADDS NEW SECTION)

Chairman Hicks noted the history of the Plan. He introduced Mr. Brian Herrmann, the Beaufort County Community Planner.

Mr. Herrmann gave a power point presentation summarizing the Plan. He thanked Mr. Bill Harris and Mr. Cooter Ramsey for their work on the Plan. Mr. Herrmann stated that this Plan is a vision of what the Daufuskie Island residents want to see for their island. The Daufuskie Island (DI) Council has been formed—elections were made and officials are in place. The Oakridge and the Webb Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) will be sunsetted (no longer exist as PUDs) and become part of the Community Preservation (CP) District. In the 2010 census, Daufuskie Island is their own census block and more accurate information can be obtained about the Island. Mr. Herrmann noted that a viable ferry system, better transportation and having a source of communication are key elements for a successful plan.

NOTE: *Chairman Hicks recessed the meeting at approximately 7:00 p.m. and reconvened at 7:07 p.m.*

Public Comment:

1. Ms. Kathy Tillman thanked the Planning Commission for their attention to this Plan. The Plan looks intimidating, but it works. We are working it and we are rocking and rolling on Daufuskie Island. There are 400 of us. When I moved there I started the one newspaper that exists today--The Front Porch. The paper is a volunteer effort. We are planning an internet site will provide the residents a means to view/interact who are unable to attend County Council meetings. The people of this community are pulling themselves up with their boot straps. The people are making the effort to improve their quality of life.
2. Ms. Mary Ann McEvoy, a Daufuskie Island teacher and a Daufuskie Island Community Preservation (DICP) member, described the plan as innovative. She spoke of the trash pickup program where residents have divided the island into sections and are picking up the trash. The residents wanted a library so they transformed a building into the library and donated books for the library. We pride ourselves as being self-reliant. We hope you pass the Plan. We've floundered way too long. As an island we ask that you pass the plan.
3. Ms. Tillman noted the formation of several organizations on Daufuskie Island including the Daufuskie Island Historic Foundation and the Daufuskie Island Improvement Club. She also noted other Daufuskie Island Council members in attendance tonight—Mr. Bill Nichols, Mr. John Hill, Ms. Karen Montgomery and Mr. Chuck Henry.
4. Mr. Aaron Crosby, the Daufuskie Island Council Chair, the residents began a series of community meeting so have an organization that would represent the island. The Council is an internal governance body. Candidates were invited and 9 members were elected to serve various terms on the Council. The Council is the voice of Daufuskie. The Council met with Beaufort County Council Chair and he supported working with the Daufuskie Island Council as the voice of the residents. The residents have worked on the Plan for 5 years. The impact on the quality of life is dependent on the Plan. Mr. Crosby acknowledged the work done by Mr. Brian Herrmann of the County Planning staff. With the Plan we can grow into an island that is the crown jewel of the County. This is a huge win for everybody. Please recommend adoption to County Council. The Planning Department has done a wonderful job.
5. Ms. Pat Beichler, a cottage industry, Director of Sustainable Living, started a farm. Goat and chicken barns were built and 8 acres were leased for the farm. There are volunteer workers and money and equipment were donated to start the farm. They are planning fundraising activities to keep the farm going. She was delighted to see the improvements made.
6. Ms. Karen Opderbeck, board member of DI conservancy, had strategic planning process with community. Developed 5 initiatives – land conservation, water conservation, land initiative where grant money received to plant sweet grass; water conservation – planting native plants and using cisterns; education; reduce-reuse-recycle. Initiatives moving forth with volunteers. Earth Day was held to provide an opportunity for others to see Daufuskie.
7. Mr. Chuck Henry, vice chair of DI Council, noted that he's lived in numerous places, but Daufuskie is unique. They people work together to solve it. Mary Field School building needed renovation. Daufuskie islanders raised \$80K and renovated and building will be re-opened as a community center.
8. Mr. Jeff Jenkins, a 19-year DI resident, noted tourism is a key industry for DI. He worked with Chamber of Commerce. Noted that stakeholders contribute time and resources. The residents put together a booklet about DI. The Plan will get the vision right.

9. Mr. Tom Crews, a DICP committee member and a local architect, noted that a charrette was held 2-1.2 years ago that brought together the community. He is also on the HHI Planning Commission. The DI process has been wonderful. The community philosophy is "Look at yourself and look at what you need." The Plan is helping the community to grow to what it wants to be. The community is successful and the Plan has pulled the island together.
10. Ms. Tillman noted that there are several developers that are waiting for the adoption of the plan. The three major landowners have worked together in the context of this Plan. We love it, we have embraced it, it belongs to us. Please support it.

Chairman Hicks thanks Ms. Tillman for her coordination of the speakers. He advised the Commissioners that the County officials need a realistic appraisal of what this Plan will cost so the Councilmen can tell their constituents what will or will not be feasible.

Commission discussion included:

- complimenting all for a remarkable job on the Plan;
- concern that adopting the Plan burdens the County with the responsibility of determining how to meet the goals of the Plan;
- acknowledging the need for an affordable and reliable ferry system;
- concern that all the landowners were not involved in the process;
- adding a caveat so that the Plan is subject to funding availability since all projects compete against each other in the County Capital Improvement Program (CIP);
- believing that the Plan, though good, was a little idealistic;
- noting that the Plan was a vision for the residents--400 full-time and 600 part-time;
- believing that the residents were an industrious group that will do things for themselves as evidenced by the three buildings they renovated to serve as a library, a community center and a school;
- the lack of Gullah presence on the council despite the 10 Gullah families on the island; (Ms. Tillman responded that the Council desires to create jobs for the Gullah families, has raised money for the Gullah museum, and is sensitive to the needs of the Gullah residents despite the lack of a Gullah voice on Council);
- the residents' participation on the writing of the Plan to include what they want;
- supporting the plan despite reservation on the funding of the projects in the Plan; and
- noting that there are 3,335 units within the Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) on the island.

Additional Public Comment:

1. Mr. James Hudson, a Daufuskie Island descendant and property owner, heard the presentation. He remembers when the island was fully populated for an agrarian society. Boats from Savannah came to the island for people to sell their farm goods and wares. If you are producing what people need, then people will come. In the past, we did enough to sell to others. You see cost, I see sustainability. He is part of the Daufuskie Island Foundation which is Gullah based.
2. Ms. Tillman noted that the Daufuskie Island Foundation plans the annual Daufuskie Day celebrations. The Gullah people want to return to Daufuskie.
3. Mr. Jenkins met Ms. Sally I. Robinson who has said, "Get a way for the people to come home (to Daufuskie)."

Further Commission discussion included:

- applauding the excitement generated by the residents regarding the Plan;
- reiterating that the residents have already adopted the plan and want it included in the County Comprehensive Plan;
- suggesting private enterprise funding rather than government funding;
- concern for funding the numerous existing CP Plans and those yet to be formed;
- complimenting Mr. Herrmann for his tremendous work on the unique Plan that is a masterpiece of work;
- agreeing with including this Plan in the County's Comprehensive Plan;
- funding concerns for the Plan—suggested prioritizing the items to be funded and the costliness involved because of the locale;
- ferrying accessibility concerns for existing residents that should have been addressed by the islanders;
- non-support the Plan since the island population is disproportionately smaller than the entire County;
- the need for a ferry system and developers to invest in Daufuskie when they know the County will support the Plan;
- the environmentally unsound patterns of development used in Beaufort in the past;
- the benefits of a form-based code;
- the lengthy timeframe needed to fulfill the vision of the Plan;
- recommending an approval of the Plan to Council with a caveat that funding sources, whether County or private enterprise, will determine the when the projects will occur;
- having the Daufuskie residents, not the County, as the instigators of moving the Plan;
- admiring the Daufuskie Island residents' tenacity to do whatever is needed to improve their quality of life;
- abstaining from the vote because of the short timeframe provided to read the entire plan;
- the status of the island's fire, law enforcement and medical support (response: the fire department is funded by a Special Purpose District, law enforcement is provided by the County sheriff on an as needed basis, and medical emergency services are provided by Haig Point or the three heliport sites used for medical evacuation);
- concern that the elected Daufuskie Island Council will be the voice of Daufuskie to Beaufort County since the other CP Plans do not have such representation;
- concern that the CP Committee will be eliminated when the Plan is adopted (response: the CP Committee will be replaced by the Daufuskie Island Council that will be charged with implementing the Plan);
- clarification that the Sustainable Planning Team (SPT) will provide design review recommendations on certain types of development to the County Development Review Team (DRT) for issuance of development permits, whereas the County Southern Corridor Review Board (CRB) will provide design review recommendations on larger developments;
- the appeal process on SPT recommendations (response: that is part of the Code that will come before the Planning Commission at a later date, the details are still being discussed by staff);
- suggest changing "regulate" to "implement" so the Daufuskie Island Council is recognized as the voice of Daufuskie residents;
- a discussion of the structure and role of CP Committees;
- reiterating that the responsibility for implementing the Plan is Beaufort County's responsibility; and

- the formation of the DI Council will be the residents' choice.

Motion: Mr. Semmler made a motion, and it was seconded, **to recommend to County Council to add the Daufuskie Island Plan as Section 7 of Appendix F to the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan, with a caveat that funding support will be subject to review and analysis.** The motion **was carried** (FOR: Hicks, LeGree, Petit, Riley, Semmler, Sutler and Thomas; ABSTAINED: Brown),

OTHER BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Motion: Mr. Brown made a motion, and Mr. Riley seconded the motion, **to adjourn** the meeting. The motion **was carried unanimously** (FOR: Brown, Hicks, LeGree, Petit, Riley, Semmler, Sutler and Thomas). The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:31 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY: _____

Barbara Childs, Admin. Assistant to the Planning Director

Jim Hicks, Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman

APPROVED: June 7, 2010