



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
Workshop Meeting
with the Oconee County Planning Commission
February 8, 2011

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Paul Corbeil, District I, Council Vice Chairman
Mr. Wayne McCall, District II, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Archie Barron, District III
Mr. Reginald Dexter, District V

PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Tommy Abbott, District IV, Chairman
Mr. Ryan Honea, District V, Vice Chairman
Ms. Andy Heller, District I
Mr. Bill Gilster, District III
Mr. Howard Moore, At Large

Oconee County Council met on Tuesday, February 8, 2011 at 6:00 PM with the Oconee County Planning Commission in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with Council & Commission members listed above present, Adam Artigliere County Attorney, County Administrator Scott Moulder, Aaron Gadsby County Planner and Clerk to Council, Elizabeth G. Hulse present.

Press: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available [*upon request*] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Member of the press present: Ray Chandler – Anderson Independent, Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio & Carlos Galarza - Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

Mr. Corbeil called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Prior to discussion, Mr. Corbeil thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers for Mr. Thrift who is recovering from a heart attack. He wished Mr. Thrift a speedy recovery and noted that he may be home as early as Wednesday, February 9, 2011.

Discussion regarding Various Zoning Issues:

Mr. Corbeil opened the meeting stating that the goal was to review the zoning process, definitions, etc. He stated the focus was to identify new ideas and opportunities for ways to improve the process; noting that not all issues can be covered in this one meeting. Mr. Corbeil asked that we not rehash old issues but work on improving the process. Lastly, he stated that additional workshops will be held in the future.

Mr. Aaron Gadsby addressed the group utilizing a PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with these minutes] highlighting the following areas:

- Overview of Small Area Rezoning Process
- Zoning Appeals Process, Current Board Members & Powers of the Board
- Adopted Zoning Districts [to include the definition and intent for each]
- Adopted Overlay Districts [to include the definition, intent and boundary for each]
- Suggested Districts [Planned Development District and Mixed Use District]
- Sample Matrix comparing uses in various districts
- Zoned & petitioned Area Map [as of February 7, 2011]

Request for change to Rezoning Map presented to Council at First Reading:

Mr. Gadsby asked for Council and Commissions direction regarding a change to the map presented to Council at first reading of the ordinance. He requested approval that when the map is being prepared that it reflect all petitions received within the effected boundary. *[Example if request show 300 acres and one parcel owner submits request to Planning staff asked for a different zoning classification; this would be reflected on the map presented to Council at first reading so that they are approving and forwarding for review by the Planning Commission the most complete picture regarding citizen requests received for a particular area.]* Discussion followed.

Council and Planning Commission members concurred with the request and asked the Planning Department to institute this change for new rezoning requests.

Discussion of Zoning Districts / Suggested Zoning Districts:

Mr. Corbeil lead discussion regarding the existing zoning and suggested zoning districts. Mr. Gadsby & Mr. Moulder noted that the new districts would provide an avenue for developers to zone a new development at the onset of the project; either commercial or residential.

The group discussed the need to look further at the following issues:

- defining “buffer” areas between zoning classifications
- identify a way to provide disclosure regarding uses/zoning classifications during real estate transactions
- identify how apartment complexes fit in the various districts

Mr. Gadsby presented for review and discussion a Map showing all parcels zoned and petitioned as of February 7, 2011. Discussion followed. **Planning Staff was directed to prepare a map showing existing commercial & properties, existing commerce parks, government facilities, existing subdivisions and forest & park lands.**

The Planning Commission agreed to review in detail the current zoning classifications beginning with the least restrictive [traditional rural] and progressing to the most restrictive. The review will include work at the Commission and public input sessions noting that this will be a detailed and possibly lengthy process to allow for as much input as possible.

Zoning Petition:

Mr. Gadsby presented for information copies of the following two updated forms:

- A Petition to Request that Oconee County consider enacting Zoning Standards Pursuant to Section 38.8.5 of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances
- Rezoning Request Sponsor Acknowledgement of Responsibilities to Present Fair and Accurate Information

Communication with the Public / Public Education:

Mr. Barron voiced concerns that sufficient information has not been available to the public regarding the zoning process and he asked what Council and the Planning Commission identify a way to rectify this situation. He also noted concern regarding some definitions in the zoning ordinance and the public’s misconceptions regarding those; using “grandfathering” as an example. Discussion followed. Mr. Gadsby noted that zoning brochures are available in the office and that they frequently replenish the display.

Mr. Gadsby agreed to draft a new brochure designed only to outline the zoning process in easy to read language.

Other Zoning Issues

Commercial Projects in Oconee County without Planning Commission Review:

Ms. Heller addressed the group utilizing a handout [copy filed with these minutes] voicing concern that projects are being approved in the Planning and Building Codes Departments that the Planning Commission is unaware of. Mr. Moulder noted that permits are approved for new projects based on existing state laws, Oconee County's Code of Ordinances. Discussion followed.

Mr. Gadsby indicated that regulations needed to be in place if projects were to be presented to the Commission and those had not been developed at this time. Mr. Gadsby was asked see what commercial standards might be drafted to address Ms. Heller's concerns.

Stronger Criteria for Lake Overlay District:

Ms. Heller addressed the group utilizing a handout [copy filed with these minutes] voicing concern that not enough is being done to protect the county's lakes water quality and the impact on the watershed. Discussion followed.

Mr. Corbeil asked the Planning Commission to discuss this issue at an upcoming meeting and forward any recommendations identified to Council for action.

Adjourn:

Mr. Corbeil adjourned the workshop meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council