



Oconee County Planning Department

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MINUTES PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING November 19, 2007

The Oconee County Planning Commission held their regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. on November 19, 2007 in the Council Chambers of the Oconee County Administrative Complex at 415 S. Pine St., Walhalla, SC 29691.

Members Present: Tommy Abbott, (Chairman)
Randy Abbott
Ryan Honea
Howard Moore
Rex Ramsay
Bill Evatt
Bill Nelson

Art Holbrooks (Planning Director)
Aaron Gadsby (County Planner)

Media Present:
Bret McLaughlin (Daily Journal)
Ashton Hester (Keowee Courier)
Dick Mangrum (WGOG News)

Item 1: Call to Order- Chairman Abbott called the meeting to order.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes - The minutes from the October 8th meeting were reviewed by the Commission - no changes were made. Mr. Evatt made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Honea seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 7-0.

Item 3: Public Hearings on the Road Name Changes – Mr. Holbrooks briefed the Commission on state requirements for a public hearing on road name changes, and the fact that the three on the agenda were the scheduled as a result of the review of all naming requirement conducted when the Addressing Office was transferred under the Planning Director.

Malfunction Junction changed to Shallow Stream Lane- Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that sole property owner on Malfunction Junction Road (who initiated the name change request) had asked for a postponement of the public hearing; the Commission agreed to the postponement.

Station Mountain Road changed to Tower Road- A public hearing was held on changing the name of Station Mountain Road to Tower Road. Mr. Luther Lyles briefed the Commission on the requested name change, stating that an error made by federal mapping personnel had resulted in an improper renaming of the road from Tower Road to Station Mountain Road. As there is no Station Mountain in Oconee County, and that the road was located entirely on Long Mountain, there is a chance of confusion. Also, in spite of the name change, the state parks employees continued to use the name Tower Road, and that federal forestry employees only used a numerical designation. Chairman Abbott called for any comments; none were heard. Mr. Honea made a motion to change the road name as requested to Tower Road. Mr. Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Cowan Road to Cowan Farm Road- Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that the Addressing Office had been notified of a delay in emergency response due to the fact that there were two Cowan Roads within a short distance of one another, both with the same road range. Using the procedure outlined in the

Addressing Policy, both road were scored, and the Cowan Road in Walhalla was selected for change. All residents living on the road were notified of the situation, and a new name of Cowan Farm Road was recommended. The Chairman called for public comments; none were heard. Mr. Evatt made a motion to approve the road name change as presented. Mr. Abbott seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Item 4: Discussion of Draft Future Land Use Map – Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that, based on comments submitted to the Planning Department, staff was recommending changing the Draft Future Land Use Map to remove specific commercial and industrial areas from the map, and instead add text stating those areas are subject to be located where infrastructure and available land support it. Also, the staff recommended changing the ‘Transitional Rural’ category to ‘Transitional Growth Area’. Mr. Honea made a motion to send the Draft Future Land Use Map to County Council for adoption into the County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Item 5: Consideration of Draft Zoning Ordinance – Mr. Holbrooks briefed the Commission on a number of suggested changes to the draft zoning enabling ordinance referred by County Council. A copy is attached. After considerable discussion, Mr. Evatt made a motion to refer the draft back to County Council as originally sent to the Commission, with the exception of the boundary description of the Lake Overlay (1,300’ from the full pond contour) being replaced with the phrase “to be determined”. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: Mr. Moore, Mr. Honea, and Mr. Ramsay voted against the motion; Mr. Evatt, Mr. Randy Abbott, Mr. Tommy Abbott, and Mr. Nelson voted in favor of the motion. The motion was approved 4-3.

Item 6: Old Business – There was no old business.

Item 7: New Business - Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that County Council had discussed the possibility of amending the Sign Control Ordinance to regulate temporary signs, but had taken no action to refer the issue to the Planning Commission at this time.

Item 8: Public Comment-

Mr. Mac Leod thanked the Planning staff for their hard work on the zoning ordinance. He also discussed the existence of positive attitudes for zoning among many residents in the County.

Mr. Dexter thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. Mr. Dexter expressed concern that the overlay district along I-85 goes over residential neighborhoods. He also stated that he believed a few people in business were running the show and that their residents generate approximately 6,000 dollars in tax revenue, far more than any business in the area.

Mr. Steve Moore thanked the Planning Commission for its patience, but stated that the ordinance had too many unknowns, and the definitions are too vague. He also stated that three of the biggest issues that will ever come before the county are water, sewer, and land use, and people need to stop and think about what they are doing. Mr. Moore also stated that he had trouble with the concept of the overlay districts.

Ms. Linda Lovely began by stating that she represents 3,000 homeowners who want protections. She also stated that because the Army Corps of Engineers has standards in place to protect Lake Hartwell, it is more protected than Lake Keowee. She also stated that overlay districts set protections for the environment, not zoning land use types.

Mr. Tom Markovich informed the Commission that he finds it very difficult to understand how there can be two types of zoning, one more formal than the other. He stated that the overlay districts only work in conjunction with zoning. Mr. Markovich stated that he agreed that we need protections, but that he was baffled by the whole process.

Mr. George Cleveland stated that the public comment should be moved to the beginning of the meeting, and that would like to see some type of protections for small business owners in residential areas.

Mr. B.J. Littleton stated that freedom is God given and property rights are too.

Mr. Berry Nichols stated that 3,000 people are trying to tell 70,000 people what to do. Mr. Nichols stated that in spite of his efforts, he could not get people to come to the Oconee Visioning Sessions. He feels that this indicates most people don't care.

Mr. Paul Reckart spoke to the Commission regarding the Employment Overlay, and stated his opposition to extending it over existing residential areas. He also complained about the existing condition of Exit 1.

Item 9: Adjourn