



Oconee County Planning Commission

415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC

29691

Telephone: 864-638-4218

Minutes

Planning Commission Meeting

May 12, 2008

The Oconee County Planning Commission held their regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. on May 12, 2008 in the Board Room of the School District of Oconee County Administrative Offices, 413 S. Pine St., Walhalla, SC 29691.

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

Art Holbrooks (Planning Director)

Media Present:
Carlos Galarza (Daily Journal)
Peter Kent (WGOG)

Item 1: Chairman Abbott called the meeting to order

Item 2: Approval of Minutes- Mr. Evatt made a motion to approve the April 14, 2008 meeting minutes as written; Mr. Honea seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously

Item 3: Public Comment Session-

Larry Linsin- Mr. Linsin stated that he had attended the recent public meeting in Fair Play, and that he and other non-residents of the area were denied the ability to question and comment. He also stated that the discussion was one-sided in favor of zoning. He urged the Commission to insure that any public meetings held by them be conducted fairly.

Dona Linsin- Ms. Linsin stated that she was disturbed with the manner in which the Fair Play meeting had been conducted. She also stated that the findings of the recently completed Visioning Plan sponsored by the Oconee Alliance had been determined prior to beginning the process.

Jerry Barnett- Mr. Barnett stated that the Oconee Alliance was pushing zoning against the will of the people. Also, the zoning effort was being spurred on by newcomers who want to change the area, and the effort to hire a planning consultant was an attempt to get another outsider to tell the local people how to live.

Eric Burrell- Mr. Burrell stated that he was a 3rd generation resident of Tamasee, and that the effort to create new land use regulations threatens the right of long time residents to protect the traditions and lifestyles they cherish.

John Little- Mr. Little requested that the Commission rescind their recommendation to refer the draft Zoning Enabling Ordinance to Council. He suggested that the County poll all taxpayers about hiring a consultant, and that the Commission should focus on more important issues than zoning.

Item 4: Capital Improvements Plan- After general discussion, Mr. Evatt stated that County Council should be urged to review the decision not spend any money on upgrading the current Seneca Library this year due to the structure's current condition. Several members concurred. Other discussion related to the amount of information available on a number of proposed capital items, with the majority of the Commission indicating they felt they could not make a decision until more was known. The Chairman then instructed Mr. Holbrooks to request the County Administrator to brief the Commission on some of the proposed projects under consideration in the upcoming budget, and schedule a meeting as soon as it could be arranged.

Item 5: Continuing Discussion of Draft Zoning Ordinance- Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that, due to the widely discussed possibility of hiring a planning consultant to assist in finishing the zoning ordinance, the Commission needed to review the definition and intent of all districts identified in the draft document to insure that any proposals submitted by the firm selected would conform with their wishes. After general discussion, Mr. Evatt made a motion to confirm agreement with the definitions and intent stated in the draft zoning enabling ordinance; Mr. Honea seconded the motion. Under discussion, Mr. Ramsay questioned whether the definition of Agricultural Districts would also include silviculture; Mr. Evatt amended his motion to specifically include silviculture in the definition of Agricultural Districts; Mr. Honea reaffirmed his second. The motion was adopted unanimously.

In further discussion, members of the Commission expressed concerns that any consultant hired be approved by them; also, they stated that they wanted to review any costs associated with the work.

Item 6: Old Business- Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that, at their meeting on May 6th, County Council members had unanimously indicated their intent to remove the Scenic Highway Overlay from the draft Zoning Enabling Ordinance when it came up for 2nd Reading.

Also, Mr. Holbrooks reminded the Commission that Ms. Dale Wagoner, SCDOT Scenic Byways Coordinator, would be briefing the Commission at their June 9th meeting.

Item 7: New Business- None

Item 8: Adjourn