



Oconee County Planning Commission

415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC

29691

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Minutes

Planning Commission Meeting

June 8, 2009

The Oconee County Planning Commission held their regularly meeting on June 8, 2009 in the Council Chambers at the Oconee County Administrative Building, 415 S. Pine St., Walhalla, SC 29691.

Members Present: Tommy Abbott (Chairman)
Ryan Honea, (Vice Chairman)
Howard Moore
Rex Ramsay
Randy Abbott
Andy Heller
Rex Ramsay

Art Holbrooks (Planning Director)
Aaron Gadsby (Planner)
Carol Harvey (Planner)

Media Present:

No media was present.

Item 1: Chairman Abbott called the meeting to order.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes— Mr. Honea made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 18, 2009 meeting. Mr. Ramsay seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item3: Public Comment-

Tom Markovich—Mr. Markovich thanked the Commission for an opportunity to speak on the proposed height ordinance. Mr. Markovich stated that the height ordinance is reasonable but he felt we would be better off placing this regulation in the performance standards ordinance as a stand alone chapter, just like we do communication towers. Mr. Markovich also stated that he regretted not being able to attend the last meeting because affordable housing is very important to everything we do in the county.

Mr. Jim Codner—Mr. Codner spoke on behalf of Advocates for Quality Development regarding the proposed height ordinance. AQD feels that this ordinance was well written and used common sense, good balance, and had variance procedure.

Ms. Sharon Hamiton—Ms. Hamiton spoke on behalf of the Mountain Lakes Community Association in support of the height ordinance. They feel that this ordinance addresses public

concerns and provides for public hearings on tall buildings and the exemptions are appropriate and needed.

Item 4: Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Update- Mr. Holbrooks presented the Planning Commission a sketch review of each item of the Comprehensive Plan focusing on what the Planning Department needed to focus on as they finalize the 2009 review. The Commission discussed several items they would like to see included in the plan: water, traffic congestion, affordable housing, local conservation bank, among other things.

Item 5: Discussion of Height Regulations--Mr. Holbrooks presented the Commission with draft language limiting the height of the building to sixty-five feet throughout the county, with all structures greater than sixty-five considered to be a special exception. The Commission discussed whether or not the ordinance would be best suited in the ZEO or as a stand alone ordinance. Mr. Moore made a motion to send the language forward to County Council with the recommendation that the County attorney weigh in on where the language should sit: in the ZEO or as a stand alone performance standard. Mr. Honea seconded the motion. Chairman Abbott asked if there was any further discussion. Mr. Ramsay stated that he wanted to insure that this ordinance did not supersede our discussion of a possible ridge top ordinance. Mr. Ramsay went on to say that the height of the structure was not as much of an issue as the steepness of the terrain, the clearing of the lot and views, the type of soils, and the design of the structure in relation to the surrounding landscape. The Commission agreed to study the issue and send recommendations to County Council after they have looked into the issue. Discussion followed. Chairman Abbott called for a vote on the motion on the floor after ending discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6: Old Business – Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that the Road Department had already put into place a procedure for amending posted speed limits and that he had passed that information onto Mr. Moore.

Item 7: New Business— Mr. Holbrooks informed the Commission that the next stakeholders meeting to discuss the Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is **tentatively** set for June 23rd, but that we were waiting to hear back from the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Holbrooks also stated that we would also cover some of the priority investment element at the meeting.

Mr. Holbrooks also stated that he was going to hold a informational meeting on the Zoning Enabling Ordinance for realtors and appraiser on June 24th from 10:00 to 12:00 pm.

Item 8: Adjourn—Chairman Abbott adjourned the meeting.