

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

Draft minutes from September 18th, 2017 Meeting

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6:00 PM, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

Members Present:

Mr. Brad Kisker
Mr. Andrew Gramling
Mr. Mike Johnson
Mr. Frankie Pearson
Ms. Stacy Lyles
Ms. Gwen McPhail
Mr. David Owenby

Staff Present: David Root, County Attorney
Adam Chapman, Planner I – Community Development

Media Present:

1. Call to Order

Mr. Owenby called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Invocation by County Council Chaplain

Mr. Root gave the invocation.

3. Public Comment for Agenda and Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes)

- Tom Markovich spoke about the small area methods for rezoning and about the corridor overlay.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion made to approve minutes by Mr. Pearson, and seconded by Mr. Gramling. The motion was approved 6-0 with Mr. Owenby abstaining.

6. Staff Updates

Mr. Chapman updated the Commission about the storm damage assessment from the tropical storm impact on our region.

7. County Council and Planning Commission Workshop

Mr. Chapman explained that October 24 is the proposed date for the joint workshop with Council, with a focus on the highway corridor planning process. The Chairman requested that staff suggest rescheduling the date.

8. Discussion of Small Area Rezoning

Mr. Root explained that although a vote had been taken on the issue at the previous meeting, only four members were present. Therefore, it was decided to table and reconsider the issue at the next meeting. Mr. Pearson made a motion to reconsider the issue. The motion was approved, and Mr. Pearson was recognized by the Chairman to discuss his concern about lowering the small area figure to one hundred acres. He expressed his belief that smaller property owners or groups of owners should be able to request zoning out of the CFD. He favored a fifty acre minimum as an alternative that is more inclusive.

Mr. Johnson asked staff if the County would be inundated with requests if the change goes to a smaller acreage. Mr. Chapman stated that he has received few questions about rezoning, partly because most of the County is in a Control Free condition. Additional discussion followed, with Mrs. Lyles suggesting that the protection of existing and future agricultural interests is one purpose for establishing larger acreage requirements for initial rezoning. An explanation of "spot" zoning followed by Mr. Root to indicate that rezoning small parcels does not by definition create an illegal change. Mrs. Lyles stated that a one hundred acre requirement to rezone seems to create a burden.

Mr. Chapman described the options the staff suggested, which included a sliding scale for acreage rezoning requirements based on the zone or use intended.

Mr. Pearson made a motion to set the Option 2 area for small area rezoning at 50 acres and require that 100% of owners of that fifty acres agree to the petition, with all other criteria included in the previous motion that established a 100 acre minimum remain the same.

The Commission voted 6-1 to approve the motion, with Mr. Kisker voting to deny.

9. Proposed HWY 123 Corridor Overlay Ordinance

Mr. Johnson commented that he had difficulty with the language and clarity of the draft provided by staff. He suggested creating a generic template that can effectively apply to the other corridors that may be considered later, with the specifics for each corridor to be addressed within that framework. Mr. Root stated that he can pull out the legal elements for purposes of the workshop and place that in a separate context so that the initial focus will be on the actual design elements and requirements.

Mr. Johnson also stated that he would apply the corridor overlay to all portions of the 123 corridor in the County, not just the segment running from Clemson to Seneca. He felt the Commission should address each of the segments at the same time, even though each segment might have different elements, so that the package could be submitted to the County in that manner. Mr. Johnson also stated that he felt some parcels that are only partially within the overlay but essentially behind the first level of development and not visible to the corridor should be somehow excluded from overlay requirements. He also felt that under six unit multi-unit development probably should be excluded from the overlay requirements, with the focus on commercial development and larger multi-family.

Mr. Kisker stated that he would discourage creating a review board situation and instead would suggest that the County encourage compliance with the design standards. Ms. Lyles suggested removing specific reference to percentages of materials that should be used on buildings. Mr. Johnson responded that this is an issue that can be pursued through future discussions with Council.

Mr. Markovich was called upon to comment. He argued that reference to joint and several liability referring to common area maintenance should be removed. He stated that there is normally a lease restriction with each tenant, and this would discourage developers.

Next, Mrs. McPhail suggested that the back of large commercial buildings should be excused from some of the materials standards because of prohibitive costs. She also stated that canopy trees required in the guidelines should have a maintenance clause built into the guidelines. There was further discussion about the definition of signage on buildings and the amount permitted.

Next, Mr. Pearson discussed limiting the height of free standing signs in the corridors. Members discussed options, including whether or not new billboards should be permitted on SC 123 or other corridors. Mr. Chapman also suggested consideration of aesthetic issues relative to signs. Mr. Pearson explained that this process could remove the allowance for billboards in corridor areas. Mr. Johnson favored having a template to lay out size options, etc.

Next Mr. Chapman suggested inviting Kyle Reid of Oconee County Roads and Bridges and a representative from SCDOT to address questions that may arise concerning transportation issues. There was some support for this idea, and Mr. Chapman stated that he was seeking Planning Commission input on the issue.

Mr. Owenby stated that he is resigning from the Commission. Mr. Root stated that Mr. Kisker will be the acting chairman. Mr. Root suggested not electing a new permanent chairman until a new member is named to the Commission by Council. Mr. Root suggested that an item be added for the next meeting to name an interim vice-chairman.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.