
Meeting agenda
July 8, 2021

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Minutes 06/21/2021
5. Public Comment for non-agenda items (4-minutes per person)
6. Commission Member Comment
8. Staff Comment
9. Open Items Review
10. 2021 Strategies Review
11. Adjourn



**Oconee County
Planning
Commission**

When & Where

5PM

Monday, July 8, 2021

Council Chambers

415 South Pine Street

Walhalla, S.C. 29691

Staff contact

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OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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Draft Minutes

5:00 pm- Monday, June 21, 2021

Council Chambers - Oconee County Administrative Complex

Members Present

Frankie Pearson

Dave Nix

Gary Gaulin

Mike Smith

Mike Johnson

Pat Williams

Staff Present

Vivian Kompier

Laura Zimmerman

Media Present

Lauren Pierce – The Journal

1. Call to order – Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.
2. Invocation was led by Mr. Nix
3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Johnson
4. Approval of minutes for June 7, 2021– Mr. Gaulin made a motion to approve the June 7th minutes. Seconded by Mr. Johnson and the vote approved 6/0.
5. Public comment for non-agenda items – None
6. Ed Halbig, Planning Director for the City of Seneca – Presented a brief overview of public transportation via the CATbus and the potential for expansion. Discussion included:
 - a. The duality of Walhalla as a municipality and the County Seat of Oconee and the need for citizens of Oconee County to have access to County services.
 - b. Expansion must be a partnership between the City of Seneca/CATbus and the other municipalities and the County
 - c. Interest of expansion has been voiced, but no serious conversations are taking place
 - d. Safety concerns regarding designated bus stops, lack of sidewalks and crime on buses

Mr. Halbig thanked the Commission for the opportunity to open the dialogue regarding public transportation.

7. Commission member comments – Mr. Smith reminded Commission Members that the next meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2021, which is a Thursday, not a Monday as usual. He also reported that Kyle Reid with Oconee County Roads & Bridges is tentatively scheduled to attend the July 19th meeting and discuss Exit 4 and sidewalks. Mr. Gaulin expressed his desire to properly thank invited speakers, for example sending thank you notes. Ms. Kompier and Mr. Gaulin will discuss details. Mr. Williams thanked all Commission Members for their service.
8. Staff Comments – Ms. Kompier gave an update on the Planning Department
9. Agricultural Advisory Board Meeting Report – Mr. Smith and Mr. Williams attended the June 14th Agricultural Advisory Board meeting to open dialogue and form a working relationship where beneficial, specifically the protection of agricultural land now and in the future. Mr. Williams reported that support from the community regarding protecting ag land is growing, there are a lot of ideas on what to do, but there is no plan. Mr. Williams believes that education of the land owners will be critical to finding the solution. Mr. Williams will meet with Mr. Blanton from the Ag Board to further the dialogue and form a plan. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Nix agreed that the positive effects of zoning need to be considered. Mr. Smith stated the strategy for Protecting Ag Land will be moved over to the Planning Commission’s open items list and Mr. Williams will be the lead on formulating an action plan and keeping the Commission up-to-date.
10. 2021 Strategies Review – Mr. Smith reminded members that as they review the strategies, to keep in mind what is achievable and attainable. Item #3, Protect ag land (8.1.1.4, 6.2.1), can be checked off as reviewed and moved to the open item list. Item #5, Road Maintenance Planning – (9.3.3.2, 9.3.2.2), will remain open. Mr. Gaulin made a motion to accept the strategies category list as written to help move the review process forward. Mr. Johnson seconded. The discussion included:
 - a. Concern that there are no strategies that have been categorized as 1 or 2, which require Planning Commission action. Mr. Smith advised the current strategies listed as 1-5 will be re-categorized as CAT 1.
 - b. Issue with sewer system in Oconee County should be a Category 1Mr. Smith reminded Commission that the motion is to accept the **process** of reviewing strategies, not to review the strategies.
Mr. Gaulin restated the motion; Mr. Johnson seconded and the vote approved 6/0.
The review of strategies list yielded these results:
 - a. 3.1.1.3 – falls under Item #3 on the open items list and the category will be changed to category #3.
 - b. 3.2.1.4 – COVID-19 bill has money for rehabbing and building affordable housing and Administrator is working through the process to be considered for funds. Strategy was marked as review complete.
 - c. 4.3.2.5 – under the purview of the Oconee Economic Alliance. Strategy was marked as review complete.

- d. 5.1.1.2 – Litter Control Ordinance was recently revised in ordinance #2021-09 and the County has posted a position for a Code Enforcement Officer. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- e. 5.1.2.1 – Ordinance 2021-11 was recently passed and protects historical buildings and monuments. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- f. 5.1.2.4 – Oconee Economic Alliance has two developers actively completing their due diligence on the Utica Mill Area. Strategy was marked as review complete.

11. Adjourn – Mr. Nix made a motion for adjournment. Seconded by Mr. Pearson and unanimously passed 5/0 at 6:17 PM.

Anyone wishing to submit written comments to the Planning Commission can send their comments to the Planning Department by mail or by emailing them to the email address below. Please Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the agenda via email please contact our office, or email us at achapman@oconeesc.com.

OPEN ITEMS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION OR DISCUSSION BY PC
(NOT LISTED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY)

- Impact Fees – directed by CC
- Junkyards
- Protect Ag Land

THIS PRIORITY CATEGORY LIST WAS DEVELOPED FOR REVIEW OF 2021
“TIME FRAME FOR EVALUATION” STRATEGIES.

Category 1 –Action by PC should have positive effect on this strategy. Related PC time and implementational expense minimal. Strategy should be in the top 75 of comments received from citizens at community meetings.

Category 2 - Action by PC may have marginal effect on this strategy. Related PC time and implementational expense a consideration.

Category 3 –Action by other committees/commissions/OEA needed on this strategy and coordinate with PC – if required - during development of draft ordinance.

Category 4 – Coordination at county administrator or county council level would result in more timely and beneficial response from other municipalities and/or state agencies.

Category 5 – This strategy recently addressed or under review or is not achievable or obtainable.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LIST OF STRATEGIES LISTED AS 'TIME FRAME FOR EVALUATION' DURING 2021

CAT 1 Housing (3.1.1.1,3.1.1.4/ 3.1.2) #14 topic most mentioned at community meetings– Review and amend land use plans and regulations to identify and remove possible barriers to the development of a variety of housing options and residential development.

Review- Housing white paper sent to county council on April, 2021. **Review completed 6/7**

CAT 1 Entertainment and Recreation – (5.3.1.1, 5.3.1.3,7.3.1.4, 2.1.2.3) #1 topic most mentioned at community meetings. PC should send letter to the Tourism Board letting them know the local residents may be unfamiliar with all there is to do in the area. Web site visitoconeesc.com highlights calendar of events monthly. Invite Ken Sloan to speak.

Review – Riley Johnson – Seneca and Ken Sloan – county tourism manager made presentations to PC. Asked for support of 2% Hospitality Tax to support tourism. Greenway Feasibility and Implementation funds in budget. **Review completed 6/7**

CAT 1 Protect ag land (8.1.1.4, 6.2.1) #21 topic most mentioned at community meetings. Limit non-ag development in productive and prime ag areas to densities and development patterns that are consistent with the continuation of viable ag.

Review – Pat agreed to review. Some suggestions: (Development Standards) - Screening, Zoning, Revise zoning ord to add Ag 5/50 Zoning categories, Urban growth boundaries, Conservation Easement, consult Ag Board. **Review completed 6/21** – Protect Ag land moved to open item list.

CAT 1 Downtown Retail – (4.3.1.1, 5.3.2.3) #3 topic most mentioned at community meetings –

Review – No action required. **Review completed 6/7**

CAT 1 Road Maintenance Planning – (9.3.3.2, 9.3.2.2) #5 topic most mentioned at community meetings- sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.) Ask CAT bus where they are planning for future expansion. Continue the discussion of sidewalks to

identify if our current ordinance is good 'as is' or if it needs revision to certain areas or corridors.

Review – Sidewalk discussion. Schedule CAT bus rep for future plans in county. Review recent SCDOT improvement of Route 24 and other roads recently announced for paving.

CAT 3 3.1.1.3 – (No comments received from community meetings) Review and amend land use plans and regulations relevant policies and proposed residential developments to ensure compatibility between new residential developments and existing ag uses.

Review – See #3 above. (Development Standards) - Screening between incompatible entities. Zoning, Revise zoning ordinance to include Ag 5/50 categories, Urban growth boundaries. **Review completed** 6/21 refer to Protect Ag Land page 1.

CAT 4 3.2.1.4 – (No comments received from community meetings) Work with the state and other organizations to identify and secure funding for housing and neighborhood rehabilitation for declining and unsafe residential areas through the public, non-profit and private sectors.

Review- There is funding in Covid 19 bill - \$213 billion for 'retrofitting and building affordable housing' (WSJ, April2, 2021) How much and when will it reach Oconee?? "Rehabbed and Ready" 20 billion in tax credits to refurbish housing. (WSJ-May 25) **Review completed** 6/21

CAT 3 4.3.2.5 – (4 comments received at community meetings) Identify projects and promote Opportunity Zone Incentive areas.

Review – Opportunity Zone are economically distressed communities that may qualify for tax capital gain deferral. Oconee Economic Alliance can best identify these areas and contact parties interested in this type investment. **Review completed** 6/21

CAT 5 5.1.1.2 – (No comments received; 6.2.4.4 -decrease littering – received 26 comments at community meetings) Enhance the visual and aesthetic character of the County and its municipalities using codes enforcement, architectural review boards, and other measures as appropriate.

Review – Litter Control Ordinance recently revised (2021-09) . County has posted job offering for Code Enforcement Officer. **Review completed** 6/21

CAT 5 5.1.2.1 – (No comments received at community meetings)

Promote the on-going improvement and maintenance of property condition and appearance of historic structures and districts

Review – New ordinance 2021-11 addressed this topic. **Review completed** 6/21

CAT 3 5.1.2.4 – (No comments received at community meetings.) Explore the purchase and adaptive reuse of the Utica Mill site.

Review – Contact Annie Caggiano at Oconee Economic Alliance for current info. **Review completed** 6/21

CAT 3 6.2.1.2 – (6.2.1 received 10 comments from community meetings) Provide appropriate assistance from County departments and agencies in efforts to identify and preserve significant lands and scenic areas.

Review – Around Lakes Keowee and Jocassee, funds are available to create, enhance and protect fish and wildlife habitats along the shores. When docks are installed a fee (\$400?) is added by Duke for habitat enhancement.

CAT 3 6.2.3.2 – Work with public conservation partners to identify additional significant natural resources including viewsheds and habitats that warrant protection.

Review – See 6.2.1.2. Review riparian ordinance.

CAT 5 6.3.2.3 – (22 comments received at community meetings) Support and coordinate with SCDHEC to mitigate identified water quality impairments.

Review – Storm Water Engineer in 2021-22 budget. LKSWPT has funds to repair septic tanks along water ways. They have tried to get interest from residents along Cane Creek for septic tank repair, Riparian ordinance review, Junkyard ordinance (drainage into ground water)

CAT 5 6.3.4.2 – (22 comments received at community meetings) Explore partnerships to develop a master plan for preserving their watershed areas surrounding our lakes including Keowee, Jocassee, and Hartwell.

Review – See 6.3.2.3.

CAT 5 6.3.4.4 – (22 comments received at community meetings) Explore and promote best practices to protect waterways in ag and developing areas.
Review – See 6.3.2.3.

CAT 3/4 8.1.1.3 – (no comments at community meetings) Work with SCDOT and other state and regional agencies to ensure projects for infrastructure facility maintenance and expansion will not be detrimental to the continuation of ag and silviculture.
Review – Public hearings will be conducted for these types of projects.

CAT3/4 8.1.1.7 – (no comments received at community meetings) Ensure that the impacts to adjacent farms and forest land is part of the deliberation and decision making for proposed public projects.
Review – Public hearings will be conducted for these types of projects.

CAT 3 8.1.2.1 – (no comments received at community meetings) Work with state and federal agencies to attract ag related grants and revenue sources and support efforts to establish pilot programs related to new ag technologies and products.
Review – Coordinate with Ag Advisory Committee on all Element 8 strategies.

CAT 3 8.1.2.2 – (no comments received at community meetings) Provide appropriate assistance to expand non-traditional and specialty ag opportunities.
Review – Coordinate with Ag Advisory Committee

CAT 3 8.1.2.3 – (no comments received at community meetings) Ensure the ability of a farm to have a farm-related business onsite.
Review – Is there anything to prevent this? Coordinate with Ag Advisory Committee.

CAT 3 8.1.2.6 – Support SC right -to-farm laws and consider adopting a county right-to-farm policy.
Review – Coordinate with Ag Advisory Committee. Can they take the lead?

CAT 3/5 8.2.1.3 – Support efforts to permanently preserve important forestland.

Review – See item 5 (8.1.1.4, 6.2.1) Forestland is now sold as carbon credits. Screening, Zoning, Revise zoning ord to add Ag 5/50 Zoning categories, Urban growth boundaries, Conservation Easement.

CAT 5 9.2.1.4 – (32 comments received about road maintenance and planning – 9.2.1.2) Explore and adopt appropriate traffic management tools and techniques available through land use regulation that utilize concept such as limiting the number of curb cuts in high traffic areas.

Review – Collision data presented to PED on June 1,2021

CAT 3 9.3.2.4 – Find and repair any conflicts that exist within the current code of ordinances to provide and maintain adequate safe and accessible trails.

Review – Is there an ordinance for trail maintenance? Parks and Recs commission should take lead.

CAT 5 11.1.2.7 – Identify the location and density of RV parks to determine if additional regulation is needed to manage traffic, ensure health and safety and address environmental impacts with particular emphasis on waterbodies.

Review –RV ordinance completed.

CAT 5 11.1.3.1 – Map prime and functioning ag properties to determine areas that may request protection from incompatible uses.

Review – See item 5

CAT 5 11.1.4.2 – Develop overlay districts, primarily along principle community entrances (highway corridors) to meet the individual needs of each district in areas such as signage, appearance, transportation needs, etc.

Review – Tried at CC level

CAT 5 11.1.4.3 – Promote development that is consistent with the character of SC Hwy 11 though the incorporation of a corridor overlay, conditional use provisions, or other mechanisms; and explore ways to preserve and maintain tree lines and scenic vistas along SC Hwy 11.

Review – Part of 24 and 28 and 107 are also scenic highway in Oconee. No support from CC for this type effort.

CAT 3 4.1.1.1 Maintain economic incentives for new and expanding industry.

Review – Incentives in place.

CAT 5 4.2.2.2 – Prepare Oconee County graduates and residents for high demand, higher wage careers and occupations, equipping them with the training and education to apply their skill in a broad and diverse economy.

Review – Medium income about \$10,000 less than State medium income. Career center training in place??? Attract higher paying businesses.

CAT 5 4.2.2.3 – Increase access to local employment opportunities that can reduce overall commuting distance and costs for residents.

Review – Is this a problem?

CAT 5 7.1.2.1 – Expand sewer service throughout areas identified by the Land Use Element as potential areas of development, while implementing appropriate measure to avoid negative impacts on sensitive areas.

Review –. Municipalities control expansion. County not member of sewer board.

CAT 3/4 9.2.1.2 – Develop an ongoing systematic road maintenance and upgrade program based on steady revenue sources.

Review – Gas Tax increase resulted in improvements in rt 24. 6.4 miles of hwy 11, 6 miles of Country Junction Road and 3.5 miles of Welcome Church Road planned. Road also for about 25 to 30 roads. Time frame for this not available. Contract to be released about middle of June

CAT 4 9.2.1.7 – Enhance communication with local and state departments of transportation on current and proposed projects.

Review – See 9.2.1.2