

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

## Minutes

5:00 pm- Thursday, July 8, 2021

Council Chambers - Oconee County Administrative Complex

### Members Present

Frankie Pearson

Alex Vassey

Gary Gaulin

Mike Smith

Mike Johnson

Pat Williams

### Staff Present

Vivian Kompier

Laura Zimmerman

### Media Present

None

1. Call to order – Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.
2. Invocation was led by Mr. Gaulin
3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Vassey
4. Approval of minutes for June 21, 2021– Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the June 21<sup>st</sup> minutes. Seconded by Mr. Gaulin and the vote approved unanimously 6/0.
5. Public comment for non-agenda items – None
6. Commission member comments:
  - a. Mr. Smith thanked staff for their hard work. He announced that a Code Enforcement Officer was hired, but there was no update on the Planning Director position that is open. The next Planning Commission meeting will be Monday, July 19<sup>th</sup>. Kyle Reid from Oconee County Roads and Bridges will attend to discuss Exit 4, sidewalks, and how the County, the Department of Transportation and C-Funds Groups coordinate with the Appalachian Council of Governments for input. We will also discuss the intersection at HWY 28 and HWY 188 and the traffic improvement that has been achieved. There will be a mandatory continuing education class on September 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM to noon in Council Chambers. Forms to add items to the Planning Commission agenda are available from Ms. Kompier for those who need them.
  - b. Mr. Gaulin reported that he met with a small group of citizens in Fair Play that are concerned about the construction boom, especially in industry, that is expected once the sewer line is extended to their area. They are seeking professional services to develop a master plan. Ultimately they will need financial assistance from the County to pay for these services. Mr. Gaulin announced that the Blue Ridge Community Center is holding an educational summer camp for grades K through 5, starting July 12<sup>th</sup> through August 5<sup>th</sup>. The

camp will run Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM. This camp is a product of volunteers in the community working through a grant with an industry—Duke Energy—to provide educational opportunities for the children in the County.

- c. Mr. Williams reported that he had an impromptu meeting with a couple of representatives from the cities of Walhalla and Westminster and mentioned the CAT Bus expansion that was discussed in a previous Planning Commission meeting. There was zero interest from either city, citing financial restraints and also their belief that it would send their business profits to Seneca.

## 7. Staff Comments – None

## 8. Open Items Review

- a. Mr. Smith confirmed the open items the Commission continues to work on are impact fees, junkyards, and protecting agricultural land. Mr. Pearson suggested that the commission take a closer look at the junkyard ordinance in Pickens County as a good starting point when developing an ordinance. Ms. Kompier agreed to email a PDF version of the ordinance to all Commission members for their review. Mr. Smith noted that Greenville had a good ordinance as well. He also reminded members that the language in the ordinance will prove to be important as individuals in the junkyard arena have a negative reaction to certain words to describe their business. Car disposal will be an important part of the discussion as well. Mr. Vassey suggested that the Commission make sure those who were vocal during the initial discussion be made aware when the Commission takes up the task of addressing junkyards. Mr. Williams added that the term salvage yard might be a better alternative and added that the disposal/recycling of metals is a necessary evil and an important piece of our recycling plan. Mr. Smith and Mr. Vassey agreed that there are multiple necessary functions in the “junkyard” arena and this should be a part of the future discussions.
- b. Strategies to be reviewed:
  - i. 6.2.1.2 – it was noted that the areas around Lakes Keowee and Jocassee have funds available through Duke Energy’s fees to enhance and protect fish and wildlife habitats along the shores. There were no suggestions on how to protect the inland areas. Strategy was marked as review complete.
  - ii. 6.2.3.2 – refer to State Riparian Ordinance. Strategy was marked as review complete.
  - iii. 6.3.2.3 – Lake Keowee Source Water Protection Team has funds available to help people with needed septic tank repairs. They are currently working with people in the Cane Creek area to improve that watershed area. It was noted that Lake Hartwell’s watershed is not addressed. Strategy was marked as review complete.
  - iv. 6.3.4.2 – Refer to strategy 6.3.2.3 with the exception of Lake Hartwell, which may need to be addressed in the future. Strategy was marked as review complete.
  - v. 6.3.4.4 – Refer to strategy 6.3.2.3. Strategy was marked as review complete.
  - vi. 8.1.1.3 – Mr. Gaulin suggested that the strategy be changed to category 1 since it deals with the protection of agricultural land. Mr. Johnson asked for clarification of the meaning of **infrastructure facility maintenance**. Mr. Smith suggested sewer pump station or generator/transformer area. It was agreed to change the category to 1 and strategy was marked as review complete.
  - vii. 8.1.1.7 – strategy was changed to a category 1/3 and was marked as review complete.
  - viii. 8.1.2.1 – Mr. Williams noted that the Clemson Extension Service often takes the lead on agricultural projects. He also noted that a major issue in this area is that several groups are doing things, but no one knows what the other is doing. He suggested it

would be nice if there was a group that could bring all the information together and make it available to anyone who was interested. Mr. Smith proposed that he attend the next Agricultural Advisory Board meeting and ask them for their input on how to get this information under one roof. Mr. Johnson worried that individual organizations may view this consolidation as “giving up control.” He suggested it would be nice to have a place where the Commission could see minutes of ag-related meetings to inform them of items they may be able to assist. Mr. Smith will attend the AAB meeting and report next meeting. Strategy was marked review complete, but will remain open to discussion.

- ix. 8.1.2.2 – Refer to strategy 8.1.2.1. Strategy was marked review complete
- x. 8.1.2.3 – Mr. Johnson cautioned that changes brought about by the Commission could have unintended consequences. For example, the expansion of the lake overlays for Keowee and Jocassee could potentially touch ag land and not allow commercial enterprise on site. Strategy was marked review complete.
- xi. 8.1.2.6 – South Carolina has a Right-to-Farm-Act; no need to adopt a County act. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xii. 8.2.1.3 – The trend of big companies buying tracks of forest land for carbon credits was discussed. Mr. Williams added that it is not just forest land, but pasture land as well. Mr. Williams believes that education of citizens is needed so they are not taken advantage of. Strategy was marked review complete.
- xiii. 9.2.1.4 – Collision data was presented to the Planning & Economic Development Committee in June 2021. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xiv. 9.3.2.4 – Commission has not been provided with any reports of conflict or concern. Strategy was marked review complete.
- xv. 11.1.2.7 – RV Ordinance that was adopted by County Council in October 2020 addresses this strategy. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xvi. 11.1.3.1 – Protecting ag land is an open item. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xvii. 11.1.4.2 – Commission tried at the County Council level and failed. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xviii. 11.1.4.3 – Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xix. 4.1.1.1 – Economic incentives are in place. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xx. 4.2.2.2 – Career center is in place and the Oconee Economic Alliance need to continue their efforts to attract higher paying jobs. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xxi. 4.2.2.3 – Refer to strategy 4.2.2.2. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xxii. 7.1.2.1 – Municipalities control expansion of sewer and the County is not on the sewer board. No resolution is in sight. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xxiii. 9.2.1.2 – Gas tax increase has resulted in some improvements. Kyle Reid can speak to this when he attends the next Commission meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup>. Strategy was marked as review complete.
- xxiv. 9.2.1.7 – Consensus that it would be helpful to the Commission to get updates on what the County is working on. Strategy was marked as review complete.

9. Adjourn – Mr. Pearson made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Gaulin and unanimously approved 6/0 at 6:00 PM.