

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

Minutes

5:00 pm- Monday, November 1, 2021

Council Chambers - Oconee County Administrative Complex

Members Present

Alex Vassey
Mike Smith
Pat Williams

Gary Gaulin
Frankie Pearson
David Nix

Staff Present

Vivian Kompier

Media Present

Lauren Pierce – The Journal

1. Call to order – Mr. Smith called meeting to order at 5:00 PM.
2. Invocation was led by Mr. Gaulin.
3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Smith.
4. Approval of minutes for October 18, 2021 - Mr. Pearson made a motion to approve the minutes for October 4th; seconded by Mr. Williams. Mr. Smith called for a vote; motion was approved unanimously 6/0.
5. Public comment (non-agenda items) – None
6. Commission member comment
 - Mr. Smith provided details on the number and types of addresses assigned in the last 10 months. Mr. Smith will work on getting a comparison of these numbers to those of the most recent years past. Mr. Smith reminded all that the County is a member of the Lake Keowee Source Water Protection Team who have funds available to help people repair their septic tanks.
7. Staff comments – None
8. Development Standards: Lighting, Screening and Buffering
 - Mr. Smith gave a quick review of the Commission's progress on the proposed standards
 - Public comment
 - i. Tom Markovich – expressed his objection to the proposed ordinance stating that the proposed ordinance will create conflict through spot zoning.
 - Commission members discussed each section of the proposed Version B.

- i. Purpose statement – Mr. Williams asked for clarification of the addition of the word “new” before development. No Commission members suggested any changes.
 - ii. Applicability – first paragraph did not change from original version. For the second paragraph, Mr. Root, Oconee County Attorney, offered a language suggestion for agreements between adjacent property owners. Discussion included additional language being added and the finality of the agreement if the property changes ownership.
 - iii. Definitions – Mr. Smith asked for input on the definition of “objectionable direct glare source.” Discussion was centered around the confusion of the definition. Mr. Smith made a motion that the Commission accept the first section with the corrections as discussed regarding the term objectionable; seconded by Mr. Gaulin. There was no discussion and Mr. Smith called for a vote. The motion was passed 5/1, with Mr. Pearson opposing.
 - iv. Lighting – Mr. Smith read the lighting portion of an email submitted by Debbie Sewell, Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Board into the record (attached). Discussion on where the proposed ordinance should be located in the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 32 or 38. Commission to pose the questions of concern to Mr. Root at the public hearing on November 15th. Mr. Smith asked for comments on the additions to the lighting section in Version B. Comments included using the RV Park Ordinance as a guide, the need to have lighting plans to scale, and the Fair Play overlay’s lighting standards being applied to the entire county. Commission decided unanimously to remove reference to Appendix A of Chapter 38 from the lighting section of Version B. Mr. Smith made a motion that the lighting section of the Version B be accepted with the discussed changes. Mr. Gaulin seconded the motion. Mr. Smith called for a vote and the motion passed 6/0.
 - v. Screening and buffering – Mr. Smith read the screening and buffering portion of an email submitted by Debbie Sewell into the record. Mr. Smith called for discussion on the current Version B. Discussion included confusion in the multiple uses of the word buffer throughout the Code of Ordinances, a time schedule to get screening in place, enforceability of the proposed ordinance, penalty for not abiding by ordinance if passed, size of buffer and conflicts with established setbacks, and impact of new development next to agricultural or forestry lands. Commission decided to leave buffer requirements in Version B will remain as is. There was additional discussion on whether screening can be inside the buffer and confusion on the difference between screening and buffering. Commission added term “screening methods” to clarify items permitted in the buffer and deleted the word “paved” from sidewalks. Mr. Smith made a motion to accept Section 3 of Version B with agreed upon changes. Mr. Gaulin seconded the motion. Mr. Smith called for a vote. The motion passed 4/2, with Mr. Pearson and Mr. Nix opposing.
 - vi. Mr. Smith called for comments on the Exemptions section. Discussion included confusion on exemptions of public or private rights of ways/easements with regards to screening and buffering. Mr. Smith made a motion to accept the Exemptions section as written. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed 5/1, with Mr. Pearson opposing.
 - vii. Commission reviewed of questions for Mr. Root at the Public Hearing scheduled for November 15th.
9. Adjourn – Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Pearson. Mr. Smith called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously at 6:40 PM.

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Non-Agenda Item Public Comment Sign-Up

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Development Standards Public Comment Sign-Up

1. Tom Markovitch
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From: DEBBIE SEWELL [<mailto:debbio.sewell@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, November 1, 2021 1:33 PM

To: Mike Smith <msmithf100d@gmail.com>; Vivian Kompier <vkompier@oconeesc.com>

Subject: Nov 1st planning meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you validate the sender and know the content is safe.

I will not be able to attend the Planning commission meeting tonight.

We want to again emphasize,

The Agriculture Advisory Board Supports Ordinance 2021-19 establishing Development Standards related to Lighting, screening, and buffering on new non-residential, multifamily, and mixed-use development.

We would like to address the following elements of the proposed document.

We appreciate your willingness to consider our suggestions.

Lighting

Light Standards in this Ordinance address artificial light and light pollution, when followed these standards would reduce the negative effects of lighting in New Developments on existing agriculture, forestland, and residential

These standards need to Be clear and concise in this ordinance. Strict guidelines are less important than Guidelines that actually address lighting that affects neighboring properties.

The 3 main types of light pollution are glare, light trespass, and skyglow.

Glare is produced by unshielded lighting and can be hazards on roadways and neighboring property.

Light trespass occurs when unwanted light shines into or on neighboring properties or roadways.

Skyglow is the combination of all the reflected light and upward-directed, unshielded light escaping up and into the sky, obstructing the view of the night sky.

General Guidelines clearly address these types of light pollution by making appropriate lighting choices, shielding lights properly, and using lighting only where it is needed.

Strict guidelines and elaborate lighting plans are not as important than guidelines that address these issues.

Screening and buffering:

Both Screening and Buffering Standards in this Ordinance address the critical spaces between, new Development and neighboring agriculture, forest, and residential properties.

Screening and buffers have profound benefits to both the existing property and the new development. They improve the environmental health, aesthetics, and enjoyment of both. Typically, higher property values are realized on both unique properties.

Screening

Screening requirements are sufficiently described in the existing document.

Buffers

Buffers are the spaces between neighboring properties.

When compared to other counties in SC,NC,and GA. Buffering requirements outlined in this document are minimal .

The AAB supports the original buffering requirements as a minimum, we will not support requirements that are less than what is outlined in the original document. However, we would encourage and support larger buffers between properties.

For your consideration,

Debbie Sewell

Sent from my iPhone