THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Planning Commission
LMO REWRITE COMMITTEE MEETING
August 25, 2011 Minutes
1:00p.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers **APPROVED**

Committee Members Present:	Chairman Tom Crews, Vice Chairman Gail Quick, David Ames, David Bachelder, Irv Campbell, Chris Darnell, Jim Gant, Councilwoman Kim Likins, *Ex-Officio*
Committee Members Absent:	Walter Nester and Charles Cousins
Planning Commissioners Present:	None
Town Council Members Present:	Bill Ferguson
Town Staff Present:	Jill Foster, Deputy Director of Community Development Teri Lewis, LMO Official Shawn Colin, Comprehensive Planning Division Manager Kathleen Carlin, Administrative Assistant

1) CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Crews called the meeting to order at 1:00p.m.

2) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
The agenda was approved as presented by general consent.

4) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
The minutes of the August 18, 2011 meeting were approved as presented by general consent.

5) NEW BUSINESS
A. Public Comment – Chairman Crews requested public comments and none were received.

B. New Business - Review LMO Report - Address remaining open issues
Chairman Crews opened the discussion by stating his appreciation to Mr. Jim Gant for all of his work in creating the *(attached*) LMO Report. The committee will begin reviewing the report today and will complete their review on September 1st. Chairman Crews then requested that Mr. Gant make his presentation.

Mr. Jim Gant began with a review of the Committee's Issue Statements & Objectives (pg. 10.). The current organizational structure of the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) is not easy to follow, and procedures are not clear and often too complicated, causing increased

costs and delays in approvals. The requirement to seek approval from multiple boards also increases costs to the applicant and extends approval times. The committee first reviewed the stated Objectives to ensure that they felt comfortable with the list. The committee felt that the Objectives were correct as stated. Mr. Gant noted that the staff is currently working with consultant, Mr. Terry Ennis, so there are no Consultant Tasks for this part of the process. The committee felt that to have the advantages of a consultant, they need to sign on to these Objectives. The consultant will need to review the staff's work/process.

The committee and staff briefly discussed a RFQ (Request for Qualifications). The committee stated that input from the public will be very important. The public should be involved in the discussion/process at this time.

The committee discussed Design Standards and possibly reducing the jurisdiction of the Design Review Board (DRB). Perhaps applications for Minor External Change could be approved at staff level to save the applicant some time. Ms. Teri Lewis clarified the powers of the DRB with regard to applications for Minor External Change and applications for Alteration/Addition. The committee stated some concern with delegating this responsibility to the staff level, due to concerns with judgment calls. The committee and the staff agreed that New Development applications and Alteration/Addition applications should stay under the jurisdiction of the Design Review Board. Ms. Lewis and the committee briefly discussed the review of signs. Public education and marketing will be very important to the success of the revised LMO. Ms. Jill Foster stated that the staff is currently working on a marketing and public education strategy.

The committee and staff discussed the importance of language -- the words that are chosen will be very important. The committee's work is a public document – public feedback should be received now to avoid public backlash later after a consultant reviews the information. A deliverable format should be developed with careful consideration given to choice of words – the committee needs to be disciplined. The committee stated that the information should be posted on the web for public review and consideration. The public needs to see what the committee is working on today.

The committee moved to a discussion of Zoning Districts (pg. 12). There are too many zoning districts, each with specific uses. These specific uses are, in some cases, too narrow, restricting development of new property and redevelopment of existing non-conforming properties, and do not allow for adjustment to a variety of mixed uses (retail, office and industrial), thereby creating vacant space. Density regulations appear to be limiting the ability to attract a variety of businesses. Affordability of multi-family uses are decreasing because the Town has no controls over the conversation of long term rentals (apartments) to short term rentals (condos). Central gathering spaces should be identified and encouraged in zoning districts.

The committee discussed the <u>Objectives</u>: (1) Reducing the number of Zoning Districts by taking a more generalized approach; (2) allow for integration and mixes of uses while protecting the edge conditions; (3) reducing use restrictions to allow for market influence; (4) identify Activity areas and craft zoning text to reflect desired outcome. Codify and implement; (5) be sensitive to impacts of a proposed rezoning approach – minimize resulting

non-conformities. The committee also discussed the Consultant Tasks and the Staff's Tasks *(please see LMO Report – pg. 12 for details*).

The committee discussed the list of Potential Development Areas (Pg. 4). The committee discussed a number of issues including the time frame, the limited availability of resources, the Revitalization and Investment Zone – Bridge to the Beach, Coligny area and Shelter Cove.

Councilman Ferguson requested that the committee consider adding the Mitchelville area to the Bridge to the Beach list. Several committee members felt that the list of Potential Development Areas (pg 4) is too long to be valuable – in order to be effective, the committee may need to shorten this list.

The committee reviewed Design Standards including a definition of Universal Design Standards and island-wide design standards. The committee discussed needed input from the committee's three design professional - pertinent points will need to be emphasized - some points will need to be consolidated and polished. The committee briefly commented on design performance standards with regard to setbacks, signs, buffers, lighting, and parking.

With regard to the creation of a RFQ, the committee discussed the issue of water quality – what is the goal in water quality? One or two committee members felt that storm water management should be the focus of water quality – what is the impact of development on storm water management? A couple of committee members stated that we need to maintain access to the water's edge – this is also a part of water quality. Design standards have an impact on water quality – one of the consultant's goals should be to improve overall water quality as well as maintain and enhance access to the water's edge. The consultant should be able to offer solutions.

The committee discussed 'nodes' where development can be closer to the beach. They also discussed opening up vistas from roadways. A better connection to the water is desired. Obstructed views of the water are a real concern for many property owners. A more managed approach may be needed for trees – a shift in thinking from individual tree protection to overall tree management. This continues to be a controversial issue – environment conditions. The committee's discussion included management of native vegetation, particularly with regard to roadways.

The committee also discussed Lighting Standards – aesthetics vs. safety issues. A balance is important - public safety concerns need to be addressed. The committee and staff discussed current lighting standards - current standards are probably high enough; however non-conforming lighting issues need to be addressed - lighting needs to be compliant. The committee and staff discussed issues of enforcement and public safety. The committee recommended that the staff review Lighting Standards.

Mr. Chet Williams presented public statements with regard to safety and lighting standards.

The committee discussed Natural Resources. It's important for the island to preserve its native vegetation; we do not want to lose our 'edge' – the island's sub-tropical environment is important to its character. The committee also discussed some concern with sub-canopy layers of shrubs, etc. Forest preservation/management should allow cleaning out some of the undergrowth in residential areas.

The committee discussed the management/protection of natural resources. The island's natural resources are a core value – broad scope view of the management of natural resources is needed. The consultant should evaluate ideas for the preservation of all natural resources. Objectives – forest management, water quality, preservation of native vegetation, protection of the sub-tropical environment. This is the island's marketing edge.

The committee discussed the possibility of Planned Unit Developments (PUDS) overseeing their own tree management. Under the Town's supervision, a PUD may be able to manage its trees. The Town would need to oversee and monitor the process. First the Town could determine if the approach is appropriate. If it is appropriate, the Town could first qualify it, monitor it second, and then reapprove it (if appropriate) down the road.

Lastly the committee discussed Administrative Waivers. The Committee Objective is to investigate the possibility of having use variances granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). Better public education is needed on when people can use the waiver process. The staff recommended a legal discussion on the pros and cons of having use variances granted by the BZA. The committee agreed with this recommendation.
Prior to concluding today's meeting, the committee returned to a discussion of 'Activity Centers' – Bridge to the Beach - Coligny (pg. 4). The committee discussed Zoning Districts with regard to the most appropriate place for development of an Activity Center.

Following final comments by Chairman Crews, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00p.m.

Submitted by: Approved by: September 1, 2011

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Kathleen Carlin
Administrative Assistant

Tom Crews
Chairman