

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Date: September 26, 2013

Time: 2:00 P.M.

Members Present: Kim Likins, John McCann, Marc Grant

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Steve Riley, Greg DeLoach, Scott Liggett, Charles Cousins, Jennifer Ray, Jeff Buckalew, Shawn Colin. Brian Hulbert, Susan Simmons, Victoria Shannahan, Jill Foster

Others Present: Drew Laughlin, *Mayor*, Bill Harkins, George Williams, Lee Edwards, *Councilmen*,

Media Present: Dan Burley, The Island Packet

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. FOIA Compliance:

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

3. Committee Business:

4. Unfinished Business: None

5. New Business

• **Coligny District Improvements Master Plan**

Jennifer Ray, Urban Designer, stated they were here today to review three different alternatives for District improvements to you and request the Public Facilities Committee review and make a recommendation to Town Council for the preferred alternative Master Plan that will be advanced as the final Master Plan for the District.

As a refresher, in August, 2012, Town Council approved moving forward with design, permitting and construction of initial Coligny District improvements. The initial improvements were identified to be a gateway feature, a central park, pedestrian enhancements, roadway and streetscape improvements, enhanced parking and a facility to include the USCB Hospitality Program and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. These improvements on Town owned land are intended to enhance the experience of residents and visitors as well as serve as a catalyst that would spur private redevelopment and investment in the area. A design team led by Wood & Partners was hired to provide professional design services to facilitate the design of these improvements. The team is here today to present to you three alternative Master Plans for your review. As I mentioned, we ask that you make a recommendation to Town Council for a Plan that will

be advanced. Jennifer Ray stated Kyle Theodore was here and she would lead the presentation today.

Kyle Theodore, Project Manager of Wood & Partners introduced Todd Theodore, Landscape Architect of Wood & Partners, Gene Bell, Project Architect with Watson Tate Savory, Scott Monson, Civil Engineer and Jeff Ingham, Traffic Engineer with Thomas & Hutton.

Ms. Theodore stated they started a process a little over two months ago. Part of that process included a series of stakeholder meetings with the public, Council Members and the Mayor participating. The outcome of those meetings is what we will be presenting today. I will start by explaining the biggest takeaway point that we heard from the folks we received input from in those meetings and the number one issue we heard from everyone is concerns that there is not enough parking. The second thing was that traffic congestion is a concern and the third was we need to pay attention to and emphasize safe pedestrian/bicycle movement in the area. The fourth item was there is a great deal of interest in open space, a park and specifically there has been a lot of discussion and support for a destination playground.

We have taken the information we gathered from those meetings and we have begun synthesizing it and creating three distinct Master Plans. Each one has its own personality and is based on what we heard from the public. I am going to start the process by having our Traffic Engineer explain the road improvements that we are proposing. The number one thing that we want to talk about is parking and we will circle back to that when we start to talk about the Master Plans themselves. We want to skip ahead to traffic and pedestrian movement through the District and I want to ask the gentlemen from Thomas & Hutton to come up and spend a few minutes explaining their recommendations to you.

Jeff Ingham, Traffic Engineer introduced Scott Monson from Thomas & Hutton and stated they had been working with Wood & Partners on the transportation aspects of this plan. They started out by attending stakeholder meetings, public informational meetings and listening to the public to understand what the issues were. We heard the same things that Ms. Theodore just mentioned: parking, traffic congestion, particularly at the Lagoon & Pope intersection, pedestrian and bicycle concerns and how they interact with vehicles and safety. We have tried to come up with a plan that addresses it all.

We have an alternate route along Nassau Street connecting over to Tanglewood. We have a new road – the Lagoon Street Extension connecting from Pope over to Tanglewood. Also, a new road connecting the Lagoon Road Extension down to South Forest Beach. At Pope Avenue and Nassau we have a new roundabout. At Lagoon and Pope we have a channelized median with some left turn restrictions to improve traffic flow and eliminate some of the left turns that typically cause safety and sight distance issues. At Coligny Circle we have enhanced pedestrian crossings. Between Nassau and Coligny Circle we have a one lane road proposed in each direction with turn lanes at the intersections. Because of that we have some minor adjustments to the entry and exit points at Coligny Circle. Along South Forest Beach we have some new pedestrian crossings and a new pedestrian path along the beachside of the road and we can accommodate that within the existing right of way because we are going from four lanes to a section where we have one lane in each direction with either a center turn lane or a median with turn lanes. We are

going from four lanes essentially to three lanes with a pedestrian pathway in that same general area. We have new pedestrian and bicycle crossings at each intersection. Mr. Ingham pointed out these improvements on a powerpoint presentation and advised they have gone over meetings with the Town and with the SCDOT and anything we do implement will need to go back through more detailed engineering and design and be approved by SCDOT. We feel that we have a plan that does improve safety. It improves traffic flow for vehicles as well. It improves the pedestrian and bicycle access and the means to cross the street. It serves the Town's project in whatever form it eventually takes.

Kyle Theodore stated they would now review the three Master Plans. They will rely on the road improvements and the pedestrian improvements that Jeff just reviewed with you. You will see commonality in each of the three Plans. The Plans are as follows:

Concept A

This Plan is reliant in terms of parking on a surface parking solution. It does not include a parking deck or structured parking. It also is absent USCB. This particular Plan has approximately 408 existing town parking lot spaces. Those are retained in the Plan. That area is the expanded. There is a void on Pope Avenue that is filled in with additional surface parking. One of the things we heard was the need for additional parking. The neighborhood association specifically was interested in gaining at least 50% more parking. This Plan accommodates that. There is a destination playground and a location for the Children's Museum. There is approximately 1 ½ acres of open lawn area and anchoring that lawn area is a fountain which would be a new icon as folks are entering into the Coligny District. This Plan indicates a total or gross number of 676 spaces or a net gain of 228 spaces over what currently exists now. That is a net gain of 56% of parking.

Concept B

We heard from a lot of different folks and one of the things we heard was that if we could gain 50% parking that I mentioned, if we could provide a park space and maximize it as much as possible and keep the feeling of greenness and still accommodate USCB we should explore that. That is what this Plan does. Specifically, the park has been retained as it was in the previous Plan but you will notice that the Lagoon Road Extension has been straightened out on this Plan. That is because we are not relying on surface parking and trying to get the numbers up as I mentioned by pushing that road up. Instead we are going to rely on a parking structure. The park is still in the same general location. It is now approximately two acres of open lawn area versus the 1 ½ acres. The remaining components are all arranged pretty similarly with the pond in the back, the destination playground, the Children's Museum, the additional parking and the fountain in the corner. The one thing that this Plan has that Concept A did not is a service road connection between Lagoon Road Extension and South Forest Beach Road. This Plan includes USCB. It is all intended to be used for the hospitality program as well as the OLLI Program, both of which would be fundamental to the success of this Plan. The parking deck is envisioned as being three levels of parking above grade. It provides approximately 692 parking spaces. In addition to the surface parking that is being provided through the road networks that I mentioned in Concept A, it provides a total parking count of 987 spaces. When you subtract out the parking lot that is there now that is being displaced as well as the needs for the new components that have been added, you end up with a net increase of 339 spaces which is a net percentage of 83% increase more. This Plan also relies a great deal on

pedestrian connecting from the park space along Pope Avenue and again utilizing the Coligny Circle interior to get folks to the beach and to get them safely across Pope Avenue.

Concept C

Concept C is very similar to Concept B. You will see that all the components seem to be arranged identically with one exception. That is we have introduced approximately 12,000 space of commercial space that is abutting the front face of the structured parking. That would be between the structured parking and Pope Avenue. That 12,000 square feet obviously has a parking requirement that comes with it. It has an effect on the overall count of this Plan. The overall parking count for this Plan is 746 spaces. You end up with a net increase of 151 spaces because of the impact of the commercial square footage or a net increase of 37% additional parking. This Plan also includes USCB.

Mr. Michael Watson and Gene Bell from Watson Tate Savory Architects reviewed in detail the architecture of the buildings, including the parking deck, and the University Building.

Kyle Theodore stated that concluded their presentation and mentioned the entire team is available for any questions or comments that you might have.

Chairman Likins stated she was going to open it up to questions from the Committee first and then will welcome public comment. Chairman Likins advised the public there was a sign-up sheet for people who wish to make comments. There is a three minute maximum for individual comments. Chairman Likins asked Ms. Theodore to keep track of any questions the public has and then at the end we can have you come back and address those questions as well as any others that may come from the Committee.

Councilman Grant advised he had no questions at this time. Councilman McCann advised he thought all three Plans were outstanding and would reserve comment until the residents from the North Forest Beach area had spoken. Chairman Likins stated she thought all the Plans were really exciting and stated they did a wonderful job taking the input that came from the last public meeting and integrated them into three wonderful Plans that could be great for that area.

Over 35 residents spoke during the public comment period. Most voiced concerns regarding traffic and some were opposed to adding the USCB feature and some were in favor of USCB. The Project Management team addressed the public's concerns and answered questions they had.

Chairman Likins asked the Committee if they had comments.

Councilman Grant questioned about the circle turning into one lane and having traffic backed up all the way to the Cross Island Parkway. Mr. Ingham reiterated that these are SCDOT roads and anything we do to them is going to require a very detailed engineering study to prove that what we are doing is going to be an effective solution. They won't let you do anything to their roads unless you do an engineering study that shows you are going to help the traffic flow.

Councilman Grant stated he heard from the residents of North and South Forest Beach areas and understood their concerns. However, as we grow as a community, in many

college areas people are moving back to the institutions and they continue to go back to school and continue to learn. By doing that, it also assists the youth that live in that community. As many of you know, you come here to retire, but you did not come here to retire and wither away. You came here to grow and continue to grow and evolve. My opinion is USCB should be on this Island just like many of you all do. This is a great opportunity for us to bring a little bit of youth to the Island and keep us all young. At the same time, continue to increase the education of all of our citizens on the Island. We want to make this area a destination for not just tourism but also as an educational asset. As we continue to go through the process and have more discussion prior to it going to Town Council, I hope that we can come to some type of agreement, or at least appreciate the process.

Councilman McCann said Councilman Grant said mostly everything he was thinking and said if very well. Councilman McCann wanted to reiterate that if they approved one of these Plans they are approving one of these Plans to talk about and not to approve the Plan.

Chairman Likins thanked the Community for coming. It is nice to see everyone engaged and having a conversation. Chairman Likins also thanked Kyle Theodore and the team for doing such a tremendous job. Clearly the traffic is a complicated issue and I appreciate the fact that this is just our initial site Plans and that we haven't gotten into all of the detail study that of course we will need and be required before anything is actually implemented. We certainly respect that it will include SCDOT as well. As far as USCB, I have stated this many times I graduated from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and we were a retirement community and an education community that co-existed in my mind beautifully. I truly believe that if we embrace the idea that as a community we can co-exist and we can learn a lot from the students and learn a lot from the individuals who are retired. I remain optimistic about the USCB idea and hope that it will be something that we can come together and support as a community.

Councilman McCann motioned the Public Facilities Committee recommend Concept B to Town Council for consideration. Having no second, the Motion failed.

Councilman Grant motioned the Public Facilities Committee forward all three Plans for discussion and debate and then make a decision as one unit. Chairman Likins seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 2-1. Councilman McCann was opposed.

6. Adjournment:

Councilman McCann moved to adjourn. Councilman Grant seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen D. Knox
Senior Administrative Assistant

Approved: 11/5/2013