

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Planning Commission
LMO REWRITE COMMITTEE MEETING
March 6, 2014 Minutes
8:30a.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Approved

Committee Members Present: Chairman Tom Crews, Vice Chairman Gail Quick, David Ames, David Bachelder, Irv Campbell, Jim Gant, Kim Likins, *Ex-Officio*, and Charles Cousins, *Ex-Officio*

Committee Members Absent: Chris Darnell and Walter Nester

Planning Commissioners Present: None

Town Council Members Present: Lee Edwards, Bill Harkins and Town Manager, Mr. Steve Reiley

Town Staff Present: Teri Lewis, LMO Official
Brian Hulbert, Staff Attorney
Kathleen Carlin, Administrative Assistant

1) Call To Order

Chairman Crews called the meeting to order at 8:30a.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 committee **approved** the agenda as presented by general consent.

4) Unfinished Business

None

5. New Business

Zoning Advisory Committee Report

Mr. Jim Gant stated that the Zoning Advisory Committee (pre-review team members, Jim Gant, Irv Campbell, David Ames and Chris Darnell) held a public meeting on March 3, 2014 to review issues with RM-4 zoning, identify options, and present a recommendation to the LMO Rewrite Committee.

Ms. Teri Lewis presented an overhead of the Zoning Map for review and discussion by the committee.

Mr. Gant stated that many citizens in the RM-4 zoning district would like to have additional density as an economic opportunity for the development of their property beyond single family houses as defined by RM-4. One single density across all areas of the RM-4, however, discourages capital investment and overlooks an opportunity for growing the island's economy. We need to find a balance between the two. The LMO Rewrite Committee has previously recommended not changing

the density in RM-4. Considerable discussion took place with the public regarding the need for changes in RM-4.

The LMO Rewrite Committee asked for guidance from the Mayor on whether we should try to address changing existing RM-4 as part of the LMO Rewrite process. Citizens in the existing RM-4 Zoning District presented a petition signed by over 300 residents requesting that all current properties in RM-4 be up-zoned to 8 units per acre. Following his presentation, Mr. Gant requested that Mr. Ames make his presentation on Initiative Areas.

Mr. Ames presented comments regarding the Advisory Committee's recommendations to the LMO Rewrite Committee on February 27, 2014 (as a starting point for addressing some of the issues related to RM-4.)

The guiding principles to be considered are: (1) the unique characteristics of neighborhoods should be reflected in land uses and density; and (2) we should strive to capitalize on and leverage a neighborhood's special qualities; thereby enhancing property values and the richness of the island's human environment.

The suggested Initiative Areas are: (1) Mitchellville/Port Royal Sound Initiative Area; (2) Squire Pope/Wild Horse/Gumtree Initiative Area; (3) Skull Creek Frontage along Squire Pope Initiative Area; (4) Stoney Initiative Area; and (5) Cross Island Parkway Initiative Area.

Mr. Ames stated that at a previous meeting the committee was under the impression that the Mayor intended to assign a project to the Planning Commission to review and update the Ward 1 Master Plan. At the last Town Council meeting, however, the Mayor indicated that he wanted the Planning Commission to look at the broader Ward 1 Master Plan (separately from the LMO Rewrite Committee's activity.)

The Advisory Committee for Zoning felt that even with the Mayor's intent to have the Planning Commission address this issue, it was important for the LMO Rewrite Committee to take a position and implement some changes that are within its purview. The committee discussed the following range of options for density: (1) Up-zone all RM-4 to 8 units per acre; (2) Implement Initiative Areas; (3) Conditional Density for family compounds; (4) Conditional density for larger lot sizes.

The committee discussed the pros and cons of Up-Zoning all existing RM-4 properties to 8 density units per acre. The pros are: (a) maximizes the opportunity (or the perceived opportunity) for individual owners; (b) it treats Ward 1 consistently with other areas that are granted additional density through the LMO Re-write process; (c) it recognizes changes that have occurred in Ward 1 since 1999.

The cons of Up-Zoning all existing RM-4 are: (a) it does not take into account the existing development, single family neighborhoods; (b) there is potential negative impact to storm water and other infrastructure not fully understood without additional study.

Mr. Ames and the committee then discussed implementation of the following Initiative Areas:

1) **Mitchelville/Port Royal Sound Initiative Area** – Leverage history during and following the Civil War. Land uses should encourage education and over-night accommodations. Take advantage of views of Port Royal Sound and transition areas within the Initiative Area might have higher densities where FAA regulations permit. Increase density for RM-4 properties along Port Royal Sound by moving them to Mitchelville District. Create a transition density area west of those parcels of 8 units per acre. This would be a special place for Hilton Head Island. These are concepts based on experience. The Planning Commission will need to work very carefully with the residents to develop a vision for these areas.

2) **Squire Pope/Wild Horse/Gumtree Initiative Area**

This area has significant public investment and a variety of housing options. No other area on the

island has the same concentration of family-oriented amenities: the school campus, the Rec. Center, the Boys and Girls Club, Taylor Park, bike paths and easy access to Jarvis Creek Park and the Children's Center. Our recommendations could stimulate more affordable housing for working families. This suggests a modest increase in density (to spread land costs) and perhaps broader land use options (to accommodate some of the needs of the neighborhood).

Create RM-8 district near schools to create a walkable affordable housing area for working families in the area between Chinaberry Ridge and Allenwood and the area to the south of Carolina Isles and west of Gumtree Road. This should include all of the parcels within one half mile of the school campus. The existing PD-2 designation at Gumtree/Squire Pope Circle provides commercial opportunity.

3) Skull Creek Frontage along Squire Pope Initiative Area

Given its impressive views, Green Shell Park and the expected Rowing & Sailing Center, this stretch of Squire Pope Road could become an important point of public access to water, environmental education and education around traditional Gullah life on the water. Even without a cohesive theme, the views, the location and the neighborhood suggest that a higher density than RM-4 is reasonable. Extend WMU District south/west along Squire Pope Road from the Fuller Pointe development to marsh adjacent to Heritage Trust property.

4) Stoney Initiative Area

This area probably requires a public/private partnership to resolve land use patterns and traffic concerns. The committee may conclude that the existing density of 10 dwelling units per acre be retained while acknowledging access onto Highway 278 must be limited. Therefore, we probably will want to recommend a neighborhood/Town partnership to determine alternate ways of providing access and development. This might result in land swaps, density swaps and or new secondary roads.

5) Cross Island Parkway Initiative Area

Existing light industrial uses adjacent to the Parkway are logical. On the other hand, RM-4 density, where land cost cannot be distributed broadly, conflicts with normal marketplace economics: high land cost, low intrinsic market appeal because of noise. Therefore, we might recommend a slightly higher residential density backing up to the highway (perhaps 400-ft. to 500-ft.) in depth. Rezone the area west of the parkway and east of Muddy Creek Road to 8 units per acre. Rezone the triangular shaped area between the Cross Island Parkway and Spanish Wells Road to 8 units per acre.

Following Mr. Ames' presentation, he requested that Mr. Irv Campbell make his presentation on the general RM-4 zoning areas:

Mr. Campbell discussed the history of the following:

Conditional Density – Family Compounds

Develop an approach to allow additional density for family compounds to address need defined by the citizens. There are legal issues with granting rights based solely on ownership that must be addressed.

Conditional Density – Larger Lot Sizes

Provide mechanism to allow more density for larger properties consistent with Ward 1 Master Plan provided water and sewer systems are in place. Consider giving 3 acre parcels up to 6 dwelling units per acre and five acre parcels up to 8 dwelling units per acre.

Recommendations:

- 1) Change the current terms of the draft LMO
 - a) Adopt the Initiative Areas:
 - i) Mitchelville/Port Royal Sound Initiative Area
 - ii) Squire Pope/Wild Horse/Gumtree Initiative Area
 - iii) Skull Creek Frontage along Squire Pope Initiative Area.
 - iv) Stoney Initiative Area
 - v) Cross Island Parkway Initiative Area
- 2) Incorporate Neighborhood Commercial Districts
 - a) Current district at Spanish Wells
 - b) New area at the intersection of Beach City Road and Fish Haul Road
 - c) Retain current PD-2 at Gumtree Circle
- 3) Adopt increased conditional density for larger properties consistent with the Ward 1 Master Plan:
 - a) Up to 6 dwelling units per acre if 3 acre parcel
 - b) Up to 8 dwelling units per acre if 5 acre parcel

The committee strongly recommends to the Planning Commission (as part of the Master Plan work requested by the Mayor/Town Council):

- a) That they work with the residents in the Initiative areas to develop a vision and purpose definition for development in that area.
- b) That they attempt to develop a solution to Conditional density for family compounds.
- c) That they explore a neighborhood/Town partnership to determine alternate ways of providing access in the Stoney Area.
- d) That they review the other Ward 1 issues outside the scope of the LMO that have been identified during the LMO Rewrite process (i.e. road conditions, etc.)

Mr. Campbell encouraged the committee to include Spanish Wells in the Cross Island Parkway Initiative Area.

Chairman Crews thanked the Advisory Committee on Zoning for their efforts in bringing today's recommendations to the LMO Rewrite Committee. This discussion has been very productive.

Vice Chairman Quick stated that she agrees with the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee. Vice Chairman Quick stated that the Planning Commission is excited to be part of this important discussion and they look forward to being involved in the planning process.

Following this discussion, Chairman Crews then requested public comments and the following were received:

Chester Williams, Esq., presented statements regarding the Gumtree Road area. Mr. Williams encouraged the committee to adjust the boundary lines to include the parcels adjacent to the school campus. The committee agreed that this is a good idea. Mr. Williams also presented comments regarding the Comprehensive Plan and Ward 1 Master Plan.

A couple of members of the public discussed Ward 1 and density with Mr. Ames. This discussion included Marshfront property along Broad Creek.

Following final comments by the Committee, Mr. Ames made a **motion** that the LMO Rewrite Committee **adopts** the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Zoning. The recommendations should be forwarded to the Planning Commission. The motion was **seconded** by Mr. Gant and **passed** unanimously.

The committee agreed with Mr. Chet Williams' comments regarding the boundary of the school being included. Mr. Gant suggested that the Planning Commission consider the recommendation made by Mr. Campbell regarding including Spanish Wells in the Cross Island Parkway Initiative Area.

Mr. Gant made the **motion** to include these two items. Mr. Campbell **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** unanimously.

Density of Light Commercial (LC) and Community Commercial (CC) districts

Ms. Lewis presented background details on the density of the Light Commercial and Community Commercial districts. There is currently a limitation on square footage. The staff and the committee discussed restrictions on size and certain uses.

Mr. Bachelder suggested that the density number for retail be limited to 20,000 sq. ft. This includes warehouse as well. The committee discussed the issue. Ms. Lewis presented an overhead review of the existing and the proposed Light Commercial (LC) and Community Commercial (CC) districts.

Public Comments: Mr. Wilson presented comments regarding increasing the uses in the Light Industrial district because the area is underutilized. The committee discussed the economy and marketability of this area. What kind of demand is there for a change in zoning? What can the committee do with zoning that will encourage people to invest in this area? Parking is a problem for the area. A change in parking requirements might encourage redevelopment. The committee recommended that staff work with property owners in the Palmetto Headlands area to develop additional uses to be permitted in the LC Zoning district.

Chester Williams, Esq., presented comments regarding the earlier discussion of buffer requirements. Mr. Williams presented comments regarding the 15-ft. separation requirement. Chairman Crews stated that this is a design standard issue rather than a zoning issue. The separation requirement between buildings in the LC zoning district should be at least 15-ft. unless Fire & Rescue requires additional space.

Prior to adjourning the meeting, Ms. Lewis and the committee discussed scheduling additional Advisory Committee Meetings (prep team review meetings). Next week's discussion will be on Design Standards, Chapter 5. Following final comments, the meeting was adjourned.

7) **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15a.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

March 13, 2014

Kathleen Carlin
Administrative Assistant

Tom Crews
Chairman