

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Special Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, October 13, 2014
3:00p.m – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Approved

Commissioners Present: Chairman David Bennett, Vice Chairman Alex Brown, Judd Carstens, Bryan Hughes, Jim Gant, Peter Kristian, Caroline McVitty, Barry Taylor and Todd Theodore

Commissioners Absent: None

Town Council Present: Mayor Drew Laughlin, Lee Edwards, Bill Harkins, Kim Likins, and John McCann

Town Staff Present: Jayme Lopko, Senior Planner & Planning Commission Coordinator
Jennifer Ray, Urban Designer
Charles Cousins, Director Community Development
Shawn Colin, Deputy Director Community Development
Brian Hulbert, Staff Attorney

1. Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Roll Call

4. Freedom of Information Act Compliance

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

5. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Kristian made a **motion** to **approve** the agenda as submitted.
Commissioner Gant **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 9-0-0.

6. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Kristian made a **motion** to **approve** the minutes of the Special Planning Commission meeting held on September 24, 2014. Commissioner Gant **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 9-0-0.

7. Public Comments on Items Unrelated to Today's Agenda

None

8. New Business

Please note: Commissioner Theodore recused himself from review of the following New Business item, Coligny District Improvements project, due to a professional conflict of interest. A Conflict of Interest Form was completed and signed by Commissioner Theodore and attached to the record.

In addition, Commissioner Gant disclosed that he is a volunteer board member on the Sandbox Children's Museum project. While there is no conflict of interest under the law, Commissioner Gant stated that he will refrain from any discussion concerning the Sandbox Children's Museum.

Coligny Area Improvement Project – presentation of Conceptual Master Plan and consideration of a recommendation on the plan to Town Council.

Chairman Bennett introduced the Coligny Area Improvement Project and stated that staff will present opening remarks on the Coligny Area Improvement Project. Former Planning Commission Chairman, Ms. Gail Quick, will then present a brief summary of the actions taken by the Planning Commission on this project up to this point. Chairman Bennett then requested that the staff begin their presentation.

Ms. Jennifer Ray presented opening statements on behalf of staff. In March 2014 Town Council adopted a resolution directing the staff to engage a consultant to prepare the plan and for the Planning Commission to develop a recommendation to Town Council. That resolution focused on six specific elements: (1) the Destination Park and playground; (2) surface parking; (3) Children's Museum; (4) streetscape improvements; (5) roadway and intersection improvements; and (6) pedestrian improvements.

The consultant will present the Conceptual Master Plan today. The staff recommended that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation to Town Council to approve the Conceptual Master Plan for the Coligny District Improvement Project, prepared by Wood + Partners, dated October 1, 2014. Ms. Ray stated that Ms. Gail Quick will now present background details on the Planning Commission's Workshop.

Ms. Gail Quick presented an overview of the Coligny enhancement project to explain how the Planning Commission arrived at the point that they are today. Ms. Quick stated that the process began in March 2014 when the Town Council passed a resolution authorizing the Planning Commission to hold workshops to receive public input on this public project.

Planning Commission members met with the staff to form a project team headed by Mr. Terry Ennis. The project team included Commissioners David Bennett, Alex Brown, and Tom Lennox. A format for the workshops known as Voice of the Customer (VOC), which is an industry-based practice approach was selected. The project team sent out invitations to the residents and businesses of the Coligny area. The first workshop was held on April 2, 2014 to obtain data and as much input on issues as possible. The workshops were well attended and well received by the public. A report on the workshops to the Planning Commission was presented on April 23, 2014, the next step in the VOC model approach. Ms. Quick presented the following issues:

a. Surface and other parking and bicycles improvements – consider parking area connectivity and circulation of larger Coligny area. Maximize parking – consider surface structured parking and transport options to maximize available land. Encourage walking and biking. Use pedestrian and bicycle friendly design techniques. Consider season fluctuation; consider parking in relationship to connectivity in circulation of larger Coligny area.

b. Streetscape, pedestrians and roadway intersection improvements - create a beach village character with a lowcountry look and feel. Maintaining lower structure heights and maintaining a similar amount of development – not dramatically increasing the amount of retail and hotel and resort uses. Plan for a larger Coligny area – not just Town properties. Consider pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation and connectivity throughout the Coligny District. Provide alternate routes to Coligny Circle or more ways to egress and ingress the area. Create a sense of arrival to the Coligny District – create a gateway effect with increased plantings. Open and preserve views to the beach, focus on pedestrian safety, traffic calming, better ways of finding signage, more defined crosswalks, a better defined connections to parking, retail, and beach. Consider potential for elevated pedestrian crossings, evaluate the benefit of reconfiguring Coligny Circle into a square in conjunction with a larger gridded street network. Address problems at intersections and crossovers along Pope Avenue.

c. Destination park, playground, and Children’s Museum – highlight coastal island lowcountry character – create a natural feeling - featuring native plants with descriptors for education, design with visibility and safety in mind. Complement the existing beach access and mirror the design of Coligny Beach Park. Provide opportunities for multiple age groups, children through seniors, with handicap accessibility – include parking.

Destination park should include the following park elements: special event space for family or special events like Shelter Cove Band Shell and the Farmer’s Market. Large areas of open space for grass and shade. Handling for maintenance, trash and dumpsters - furnishings and features, pathway seating, swings, benches, interactive water feature, restrooms, shelter, sculpture, exercise stations, and emergency phone.

d. Children’s Museum - Provide 3,500 sq. ft. inside space; 1,500 sq. ft. of outdoor space for the Children Museum, adjacent to open space and playground. Consider a lowcountry look with porches, swings, and rocking chairs for the Children’s Museum. Create a unique playground design, not cookie cutter, for example, Harbour Town playground, treehouse, platforms, ropes, swings, sea-saw, etc., that can accommodate multiple age groups safely. Playground design to include drinking water fountains, seating for parents, adequate shade, and fence for safety and a coastal island beach theme. This is the input that was received from the community.

Ms. Quick stated that coordinating the workshops and input from the community represented a team effort including the Planning Commission, Coligny businesses and residents, and Town staff. The workshops were developed through a unique workshop concept brought forward by former Planning Commissioner, Terry Ennis. Ms. Quick encouraged the Planning Commission to continue using this working model for all public projects that are brought before the Planning Commission. This completed Ms. Quick’s presentation. Chairman Bennett thanked Ms. Quick for her presentation and then requested that the consultant make their presentation.

Ms. Kyle Theodore, Wood + Partners, made the presentation on behalf of the consultant. Ms. Theodore stated that Wood + Partners serves as the project team leader, landscape architects, and planners hired by the Town to assist with the Coligny District Improvement Project. At this time, Ms. Theodore introduced Mr. Todd Salvagin, Engineer, with SRS Engineering, to present the parking study for the project. Mr. Salvagin stated that SRS

Engineering has completed an assessment of the Town public beach parking facility located at Coligny Circle, just north of South Forest Beach Road and west of Pope Avenue.

The purpose of the study is to determine multiple factors; what supply of parking is provided at the existing facility, what parking demand occurs over a typical summer day and potential modifications to mitigate any parking and/or vehicle circulation issues.

The Town's public beach parking lot is a surface lot located in the northwest quadrant of the Pope Avenue at South Forest Beach Road intersection which is commonly referred to as the Coligny Circle. The parking lot is provided access/egress to/from Pope Avenue opposite Lagoon Road and egress only to South Forest Beach Road slightly skewed to the west of the Beach House Resort access drive. Total number of parking spaces (supply) was inventoried at 416 spaces, which included both ADA spaces as well as general purpose parking spaces.

Parking demand observations were collected for a total of six days; Thursday, June 12th; Saturday and Sunday, June 14th & 15th; Saturday and Sunday, June 21st and 22nd and Thursday, June 26th. These dates reflect two distinct time periods, the first three days reflect the 45th highest traffic periods which are consistent with the Town's LMO for traffic volumes and the second three days reflect a time period as provided by the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce when the accommodations/hotel rooms have high occupancy rates.

Mr. Salvagin presented statements regarding parking supply vs. demand. During the days identified above (both weekday and weekend), counts were conducted within the Town parking lot between 9:00AM and 5:00PM. Actual numbers of occupied parking stalls were gathered for each 60-minute time intervals at the beginning of each hour of the survey.

Mr. Salvagin presented an overhead review of a Table showing the Parking Demand Counts, Town Public Parking at Coligny Beach. As illustrated in the table, supply at this parking lot is satisfactory during the weekday (Thursday). However, for weekends (both Saturdays and Sundays), multiple time periods indicate that the parking supply is not sufficient and demand exceeds the current number of provided parking stalls.

Further review of the information indicates that the main peak time periods are between the hours of 12 Noon and 4:00PM. These peak time periods are to be expected due to the fact that this parking facility is anticipated to serve the adjacent recreational Coligny Park. To put this demand in an annual estimate, during the summer months, demand is exceeding supply for approximately 9 – 10 hours per week (Saturday, June 15th, 4-hours & Sunday, June 21, 5-hours).

During the peak summer months (June, July and August) there are approximately 4 weeks per month, or a total of approximately 40-hours out of the peak summer months that parking demand exceeds supply within the Town's public beach parking lot.

During the completion of the parking surveys, it was observed that during the peak time periods when all of the legal parking stalls were occupied, many vehicles parked "illegally" on grass medians and islands as well as parked in drive aisles. While these vehicles are not formally accounted for in the above demand numbers, it is worth noting that up to 15

vehicles were observed to be illegally parked throughout the parking facility during peak time periods.

Recommendations:

The final phase of the analysis process is to identify potential measures to improve parking and/or traffic circulation within the Coligny parking facility.

1. Standard parking stall size: Currently the supply of parking within the Coligny lot includes a percentage of spaces that are under sized. Length and especially width of a parking stall is important for serving vehicles which are orientated towards recreating at a public beach. It is suggested that the standard parking stall provide a minimum width of 9-feet and a length of 18-feet (which is consistent with Town standards). This stall will provide space for the typical user of the parking lot with the loading and unloading of beach supplies, multiple occupants, etc.
2. ADA Parking Spaces: The Town facility currently includes several ADA parking spaces which are typically in close proximity to the southeast corner of the over-all parking lot (adjacent to the walkway crossing South Forest Beach Drive). To the south of Coligny Circle, there is a limited number of parking stalls, both ADA as well as standard size stalls. Given the proximity of the Town parking area to the beach and the proximity of the beach to the small parking area located to the south of Coligny Circle, it would be advantageous to re-work the small parking lot adjacent to the Coligny Beach Park to contain ALL of the required ADA spaces. This will provide the most accessible parking for ADA parking stall users and would potentially allow the restriping of the Town's parking lot to remove the current ADA spaces as long as Federal ADA criteria is being met.
3. Re-design Town's Parking Facility: As has been discussed with Planning Commission and Town Council, we are in agreement with the strategy to improve internal circulations of the current lot. This lot is circuitous which results in inefficiencies for not only vehicles circulating within the parking lot, but also parking lot layout. Improvements in the parking area design should remove the "one-way" aisles located in the easterly portion of the parking lot (closest to Pope Avenue) as well as improve the entry and exit aisles, throat and access points to the parking area. As part of this redesign, it is suggested that the existing exit only access to South Forest Beach become a two-way drive allowing both entry and exit of the parking facility.
4. Additional Parking Supply: The current supply of parking does not meet the demand for the 4-5 hour time period during the summer weekend days (Saturday & Sunday). Additional supply would improve the current deficiencies but the main question is, "How many spaces are needed to reasonably meet seasonal parking demand?" The sensitivity of this supply is not to provide parking supply to meet demand 100% of the time, but to rather reduce the number of intervals when demand exceeds the supply within the Town facility. In view of the current demand and based on observations at the Town's facility, it is suggested that the parking supply in this Town parking facility be increased by 75 – 100 additional spaces. This would result in a total supply of between 491 and 516 parking stalls within the Town facility or an 18 – 24 % increase in supply.
5. Parking Management: During peak seasonal usage, it may be prudent to staff the facility so that illegally parked vehicles no longer impact the usage of the parking spaces

and circulation. Staff can also ensure that the stalls are being fully utilized by directing drivers to vacant parking spaces.

6. Signage: Directional signage for this facility as well as other Town beach parking facilities should be enhanced so that drivers can easily locate this Town facility. Wayfaring signage along U.S. 278 Business as well as along Palmetto Bay Road may be helpful as well as signage directly identifying the entrances to facilities may help drivers efficiently locate and utilize these public parking areas.

Mr. Salvagin and the Planning Commission discussed several issues including the traffic study, parking lots, parking counts, and peak occupancy rates. Following Mr. Salvagin's presentation and discussion by the Planning Commission, Ms. Theodore resumed her presentation with an in-depth overhead review of the Conceptual Master Plan. Ms. Theodore stated that the Conceptual Master Plan incorporates the elements presented by Ms. Gail Quick. The design was combined with the traffic and parking recommendations presented by Mr. Todd Salvagin.

Ms. Theodore stated that the plan is a long-range plan, something that would occur over time and as funds allow. The intent is to create a vision for the district that can act as a road map for future improvements that provides a cohesive target to the area to work toward.

Ms. Theodore presented details regarding parking arrangements including surface parking, structured parking at a future phase, and open air parking. Ms. Theodore discussed proposed improvements to the South Forest Beach corridor. Park with large open space fronting Pope Avenue, dual pathways along Pope Avenue, dual interior pathway for casual use with shade structures and arbor swings, framed views into the park, introduce small wetland area as foreground to the park with appropriate plantings.

Based on the public and Planning Commission input and in conjunction with the traffic and parking assessments, the consultant team prepared a Conceptual Master Plan for improvements within the Coligny District. Improvements are focused on:

- a. **roadway and intersection improvements** including Nassau Street extension, Lagoon Road signalization and extension, realignment of the parking lot entrance, and the addition of a signal on South Forest Beach Drive;
- b. **surface parking** including +/- 553 permanent parking spaces in the parking lot and on street parking which represents an increase of +/- 137 permanent useable parking spaces;
- c. the creation of a **destination park and playground** including a central event space for passive and event use, a perimeter trail network with exercise stations and interpretive signage/experiences, a band shell/pavilion (see attached 12), restroom/shelter with drop-off, and an adventure playground that is lowcountry and nature themed with separate areas for different age groups;
- d. a **children's museum** with +/- 3,500 sf indoor museum space and +/- 1,500 sf outdoor play space adjacent to dedicated parking;
- e. **streetscape improvements** on Pope Avenue and South Forest Beach Drive; and
- f. **pedestrian improvements** including new leisure trails and enhanced pedestrian crossings.

The Planning Commission and Ms. Theodore discussed several issues including the parking study, parking enhancement, parking redesign, and roadway improvements. Chairman Bennett invited public comments and the following were received:

1. Mr. Jack Daly, resident of Forest Beach, presented statements in support of the plan including idea of structured parking.
2. Mrs. Leslie Richardson presented statements in strong support of moving forward with the excellent plan.
3. Ms. Jenny Serratti also presented statements in strong support of the excellent plan.
4. Mr. Peter Ovens presented statements regarding the cost benefit of having a shuttle system vs. structured parking.
5. Ms. Gail Quick stated strong support for the plan and congratulated Ms. Kyle Theodore in incorporating the Planning Commission's recommendations into the excellent plan.
6. Mr. Henry Sanders presented statements in overall support of the proposed project. Mr. Sanders presented statements in concern of the structured parking concept.
7. Ms. Carla Remiggie presented statements in strong support of the plan, including the aesthetics of structured parking.
8. Mr. Jason Long presented statements in strong support of the proposed plan, with some conditions regarding parking issues.
9. Mr. David Martin presented statements in strong support of the plan.
10. Ms. Barb Fitzgerald presented statements in overall support of the plan, with some reservations regarding structured parking.
11. Ms. Barb Freeman presented statements in strong support of the excellent plan.
12. Mr. Frank Babel urged the Planning Commission to move forward with the excellent plan. Mr. Babel stated that he likes the idea of an island-wide shuttle service.

Following all public comments, Chairman Bennett invited discussion by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission complimented the plan and encouraged Town Council to consider a cost benefit analysis of structured parking.

Chairman Bennett encouraged structured parking as a way of saving land for future use or additional green space. Commissioner Hughes complimented the plan and presented statements regarding a parking structure. The open air parking concept may be a good idea in the short term.

Vice Chairman Brown presented statements in support of an island-wide shuttle service. Vice Chairman Brown asked about next steps and the timeline involved in the process. Ms. Jennifer Ray presented statements with regard to next steps. The consultants are prepared to move forward with Phase 1 Design Work (based on the Planning Commission's recommendation and approval by Town Council). Vice Chairman Brown encouraged approval of the plan by the Planning Commission. Vice Chairman Brown recommended that Town Council move quickly with the recommendation made by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Kristian requested clarification regarding the issue of structured parking. The plan before the Planning Commission today does not include structured parking. Chairman Bennett stated that he would like to request that Town Council give the concept of structured parking some consideration with a cost benefit analysis included. Following final comments by the Planning Commission, Chairman Bennett requested that a motion be made.

Commissioner Taylor made a **motion** that the Planning Commission forward the Coligny Area Improvement Project plan as submitted to Town Council with a recommendation of **approval**. As part of the recommendation for approval, the Planning Commission recommended that Town Council consider a cost benefit analysis of structured parking within the district. The cost benefit analysis of structured parking should include the concept of an island-wide shuttle service. Commissioner Kristian **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 8-0-0.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

November 5, 2014

Kathleen Carlin
Secretary

David Bennett
Chairman