

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
November 8, 2017

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the City Hall conference room, 1207 Palm Boulevard on November 8, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. Members attending included Ron Denton, Vince DiGangi, Richard Ferencz, Lewis Gregory, Bill Mills and Lisa Safford; the Director of Planning Douglas Kerr was present as well. The press had been notified of the meeting and the agenda for the meeting was posted in City Hall and the Building Department to comply with the Freedom of Information Act.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ferencz explained that the next item on the agenda was the approval of the October 11th, 2017 minutes. Mr. Mills made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted and Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION WITH DIRECTOR PITTS REGARDING STORMWATER

Mr. Kerr explained that at the last meeting, the Commission expressed an interest in meeting with Director Pitts about stormwater issues on the island and how they are managed and Mr. Pitts was present to discuss these issues.

Mr. Ferencz asked that Director Pitts start off by explaining what the City's arrangement was with Eadie's Construction to maintain the stormwater system. Mr. Pitts answered that the agreement with Eadie's is in the process of being amended to increase the frequency of maintenance activities, but that historically the agreement has been to restructure every ditch every five years, and remove the vegetation from every ditch once a year. He said that the City is working to increase the frequency to include restructuring every ditch every three years and clean the vegetation out of every ditch up to three times per year.

Mr. Kerr asked Mr. Pitts to clarify if the City or Eadies maintained the parts of the stormwater system that belonged to SCDOT. Mr. Pitts answered no, that the City has been directed by SCDOT to not maintain the stormwater system in the SCDOT rights-of-way, which includes all of the roadside ditches and pipes. Mr. Kerr asked what percentage of the total system was within SCDOT's jurisdiction. Mr. Pitts estimated that it would be greater than 50% of the system was within SCDOT's rights-of-way.

Mr. Mills asked if the maintenance of the system was expensive. Mr. Pitts answered yes, that to unclog a handful of driveway crossings around Lauden Drive before the arrival of the storm was about \$30,000.

Mr. Ferencz asked if it would be possible to meet with SCDOT on the idea of allowing the City to do more maintenance on the SCDOT system. He stated that if the City had everything perfect on the non-SCDOT portions of the system, there would still be more than half of the system that was not being maintained to a high level. Mr. Kerr answered that he could try to arrange that meeting, but that the Commission had previously agreed to meet with a stormwater representative from Charleston County and he suggested that the County representative could probably recommend an appropriate person with SCDOT to meet with.

The Commission agree to meet with Charleston County at their next meeting and then meet with SCDOT at the meeting after that. They thanked Director Pitts for attending the meeting.

DISCUSS IMPERVIOUS SURFACE REQUIREMENTS

Mr. Kerr explained that at the last meeting, the Commission discussed options for improving the ordinances as they pertain to impervious surfacing and filling lots on the island. He stated that he had distributed a copy of the Sullivan's Island stormwater management plan requirements and lot coverage requirements. He explained that the requirements for the two communities were similar, but that he liked some of the additional measures included in the Sullivan's Island ordinance and he thought it might strengthen the Isle of Palms ordinances to incorporate some of the changes.

Mr. Kerr explained that in terms of stormwater plan requirements, some of the primary differences in the two ordinances were that Sullivan's Island required the submittal of a stormwater plan for every new building, where the Isle of Palms currently only requires the submittal of a plan when a lot is being filled or elevated. He stated that another difference is that the Sullivan's Island ordinance limits the amount of fill that can be brought in to one foot above the natural grade, where the City's requirement sets no limit, but relies on the designer's certification that the fill will not adversely impact surrounding areas.

The Commission discussed the two ordinances and agreed that it would be helpful to amend the Isle of Palms ordinance to include some of the Sullivan's Island language. Mr. Kerr stated that he would forward the ordinances onto the City's Attorney for drafting and he would report back with amendments to consider.

Mr. Kerr directed the group to the sections of the codes dealing with impervious surfacing. He stated that some of the key differences are that Sullivan's Island's ordinance establishes a minimum infiltration rate of 2.0 inches per hour for a surface to be considered pervious. He explained that there is currently no minimum standard in the Isle of Palms code. He added that the Sullivan's Island ordinance also established a minimum percentage of the lot that is left to be vegetative and the Isle of Palms ordinance does not include such a limit. He explained that when the Isle of Palms first established lot coverage limits, the Planning Commission recommended that a minimum percentage of vegetation be established as well, but he remembered that the City Council saw this as an aesthetic consideration, which the Isle of Palms had traditionally not regulated, so it was removed. He stated that the same objection could be made again, but he thought it may be worth revisiting. He explained that another difference was that the Sullivan's Island code established a sliding percentage that increased the allowable lot coverage limit as the lot size decreased, where the Isle of Palms ordinance set a flat requirement at 40%, with a maximum cap and a minimum floor. He stated that he preferred the simplicity of the Isle of Palms method and that because Sullivan's Island had so many large lots, this provision would make better sense in their community than on the Isle of Palms.

Mr. Denton showed an example of 30% coverage, which is the Sullivan's Island requirement for half acre lots, and he explained that it was a fairly limiting control. He added that he was not convinced that decreasing the amount of lot coverage allowed on the Isle of Palms would have a meaningful impact on the stormwater issues. He stated that he believed that if the stormwater infrastructure is nonexistent or underperforming, a 10% reduction in impervious surface would not solve matters.

Mr. Kerr stated that because the Commission would have access to the County Public Works engineers at the next meeting, it might be good to discuss these issues with them. The Commission agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Richard Ferencz, Chairman