

**PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS**

6:30 p.m., Tuesday, September 22, 2009

1. Mayor Cronin called the meeting to order and acknowledged that the press and public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Attending the hearing were Council members Bergwerf, Bettelli, Buckhannon, Duffy, Loftus, Piening and Rice, Mayor Cronin, City Administrator Tucker, Building Department Director Kerr, Assistant to the Administrator Dziuban and City Clerk Copeland. Councilman Taylor's absence was excused.

The Mayor noted that the purpose of this Public Hearing was to hear input from City residents on the revisions and updates to the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Isle of Palms, and he asked Administrator Tucker to provide insight into the preparation of the amended Plan seeking approval at the City Council meeting to follow.

The Administrator recounted that, in 1994, state law was passed requiring all local governments to have a Comprehensive Plan, and, subsequent to that, the Planning Commission and City Council of the City of Isle of Palms wrote and adopted a plan. There have been revisions in the past, as required by state law, but this amended version includes two (2) new elements, i.e. transportation and priority investment. The Planning Commission has presented its thoughts on the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to City Council, and Council has reviewed it and passed it for First Reading. By state law, the City must hold a Public Hearing before the Comprehensive Plan can receive final approval.

2. Ordinance 2009-12 – An Ordinance Amending the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina pursuant to the 1994 State South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act.

Mayor Cronin asked Director Kerr to preview the key points of the amended plan as it is being presented. In general, the Director stated that this revision includes updates to information, typographical corrections and greater clarity of language in addition to the two (2) new elements i.e. transportation and priority investment; there are also sections that address beach erosion and stormwater management. The Director noted that the previous version had been silent on beach erosion, but the Planning Commission believed it to be a major development on the north end of the island that must be addressed.

Since the adoption of the last Comprehensive Plan, the City has entered into an agreement with Charleston County to administer the NPDES requirements as required by the Clean Water Act, which was a second major change since the last version of the City's Comprehensive Plan was approved.

To address the Priority Investment Act, the Commission had to study the pressures the City could potentially face in the future; the issue of parking came up numerous times. The Commission agreed that the City must develop some type of parking management system, and the Planning Commission has started on that project already.

Traffic counts have been expanded in the appendix detailing data month by month.

The other appendices in the Plan are the Land Use Map and the Zoning Map; these maps were not changed by any information included in the amended plan.

Jane McMackin, 35 Thirty-second Avenue, expressed that she was speaking as a “cheerleader” for the Comprehensive Plan because she believes it to be a very important document; she referred to it as “The Bible” for the community. She displayed her dog-eared and worn copy of the Comprehensive Plan as evidence to the amount of times she had used it as a reference tool in decision-making when she served on City Council.

Mrs. McMackin congratulated the Planning Commission for the time involved in making the amendments included here, and she expressed her special approval of the parking study that Director Kerr had referenced. She commented about the parking concerns many residents feel, particularly in the areas of Carolina and Charleston Avenue, and she voiced hope that City Council would follow through with the Commission’s suggestion. Mrs. McMackin stated that she had found it disappointing, as a Council member, to see that the Comprehensive Plan was not referred to or used more often in making decisions for the island.

Mrs. McMackin quoted the following from the Plan:

“. . . assuring the quality of life of full-time residents and that it not be diminished by the vacation rental commerce.”

“The primary land use activity has been, and should continue to be, low- and medium-density residential uses. The scale and density of new development and the expansion of existing development should not destruct the neighborhood family atmosphere of the island, and exceeding this capacity, the capacity of dwelling units rented to guests, and that they have a level of activity that is not disruptive to the neighborhood and exceeding this capacity should be discouraged in order to maintain the quality of life for the greater community.”

Mrs. McMackin noted that these things are in the City’s Comprehensive Plan and commented that they are things to which attention should be paid.

She referenced page 26 where the following statement appears:

“Investigate the potential for establishing small parks on City-owned, undeveloped green spaces.”

The Amended Plan suggests amending “the zoning ordinance to limit the density of development allowed on property not service by a public wastewater system.” Mrs. McMackin notes that there are many properties on the island that are still service by septic tanks; the Comprehensive Plan supports holding down density in those areas.

She concluded by quoting “Ensure compatibility between the Comprehensive Plan and the regulatory ordinances.” Mrs. McMackin indicated her feeling that the Comprehensive Plan

exists to guide the Council on the direction in which the island should go, to maintain the type of community that is present and to ensure that the Plan is compatible with the City's Code of Ordinances. She noted that, if the ordinances were in agreement with the Comprehensive Plan, "we would all be happy, and maybe there would not be so many arguments about the way things are going."

Mrs. McMackin encouraged the sitting Council and the Council prospects to pay attention to the Comprehensive Plan when making decisions for the City.

3. Adjourn

Respectfully submitted:

Marie B. Copeland
City Clerk