

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
October 11, 2017

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the City Hall conference room, 1207 Palm Boulevard on October 11, 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

Ms. Donna Hart, #17- 20th Avenue, asked what the criteria was to have a flapper valve installed on a drainage outfall. Mr. Kerr answered that there is no criteria per se, but the ones that have been installed on the island were specified by the civil engineers working on the particular project. He explained that he believed the one installed near Breech Inlet was done by SCDOT when they made drainage modifications for the construction of the new bridge. He stated that there was no set conditions when flappers were installed, but he was aware that they require a lot of maintenance because growth can cause them to malfunction.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

With no more public comments, Mr. Ferencz explained that the next item on the agenda was the approval of the September 20th, 2017 minutes. Mr. Gregory stated that his name showed up as "Mr. Lewis" instead of "Mr. Gregory." Mr. Denton made a motion to approve the minutes with the proposed amendments and Mr. Ferencz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE HOTEL WITH WILD DUNES

Mr. Kerr explained that Mr. DiGangi had requested that this item be put on the agenda and the Wild Dunes staff was present to discuss the future development of a hotel. Mr. Gregory asked what role the Planning Commission would have with the project. Mr. Kerr answered that the Planning Commission would not be involved with the approval of the hotel, but as he understood what was being requested, the Commission would look at the impact of traffic outside of the Wild Dunes gate to determine if some changes needed to be made outside of Wild Dunes. He explained that the original Wild Dunes planned development agreements gave the resort the right to develop a certain number of hotel rooms and this development would be allowed under that agreement.

Mr. Dan Battista with Wild Dunes introduced the design team and asked that the resort manager, Frank Fredericks, walk the Commission through the concept of the

development and he would talk about the details. Mr. Fredericks explained that at the location of the existing Wild Dunes administration building, at 57th and Palm Boulevard,

the existing building would be demolished and in its place there would be a new 153 room hotel with a spa, a roof top entertaining area, an outside restaurant and an expanded pool area. He stated that the plan also included changing the configuration of the rear gate to add new lanes and move the guard house to better handle the guests coming to stay within the resort's properties.

Mr. Denton asked what the parking requirement would be. Mr. Battista answered that the parking for the new hotel would be underneath the hotel and it would be controlled by a valet service and it would be in compliance with the Wild Dunes PDD (Planned Development District) requirements. He added that all of the guests of the resort would be directed to the newly configured gate and because of all of the additional queuing area, they believe the backups on Palm Boulevard would be greatly reduced, if not eliminated.

Mr. Ferencz asked how guests will know which gate to go to. Mr. Fredericks answered that the resort is in contact with all of their guests numerous times before their trip and directions include a video, signage and GPS coordinates to ensure that they go to the correct gate.

Mr. Denton asked what the resort expected the difference to be between the current traffic counts and the expected new counts. Mr. Battista explained that the existing administration building will be moving off the island and over 80 employees that are currently reporting to work every day on the island will be going elsewhere, which will help minimize the impact. The traffic engineer working on the project, Ms. Jennifer Bihl with Bihl Engineering, explained that according to their analysis, at the very peak hours of the summer they expect an additional 100-150 trips per hour over what is currently happening. She explained that this is about two additional cars per minute, which the new configuration of the rear gate is designed to accommodate.

Mr. Mills asked what the capacity of the new conference room would be. Mr. Fredericks answered about 250 people. Mr. Mills asked if these people would be in addition to the guests staying at the hotel. Mr. Fredericks answered no, it would always be their intent to have the people using the conference room to be guests of the hotel. He explained that they have this condition now with the Boardwalk Inn and the people using conference space are always guests of the hotel.

Mr. Kerr stated that early in discussions, he heard talk about adding an additional lane to Palm Boulevard just prior to getting to the rear gate and he asked if the resort was still considering this. Mr. Battista explained that they had discussed this and been advised that with the newly configured rear gate lanes there would be no reason to change Palm Boulevard.

With no other questions, the Commission thanked the Wild Dunes team for attending the meeting and answering questions.

DISCUSS STORMWATER ASSIGNMENT

Mr. Kerr explained that at the last meeting, the Commission discussed options for assisting the City Council with planning for the stormwater system on the island. He explained that a few members of the Commission were not present and the group agreed to discuss the idea further before beginning work on the project.

He explained that it was his thought that the Planning Commission could be useful to the Council in establishing a list of priorities for the Council to consider. He explained that for many years, the City has been setting aside funding for phase one and two of the stormwater expansions for the avenues between 57th and 45th Avenues. He stated that phase two of this project should be completed this winter, so there could be new priorities established for future projects. He explained the packets included a datasheet with some of the top priorities identified by the staff and he stated that he thought that the Commission could gather data about the cost and the severity of each of these priorities and establish an order of priorities.

Mr. Ferencz stated that he felt like it would be useful for the Commission to create a standardized process for dealing with drainage issues. Mr. Kerr stated that he envisioned calls regarding maintenance issues to be handled by the Public Works Department the same way they are currently handled. He asked if Mr. Ferencz was talking about creating a process for dealing with routine maintenance calls. Mr. Ferencz answered yes.

Mr. Gregory stated that he felt that to be involved with how each call is handled would be too granular for the Planning Commission and he felt that this type work should be handled by the Public Works Department and their committee.

Mr. DiGangi asked if the Commission could discuss how these issues are being handled with the Public Works staff. Mr. Kerr answered yes, he could ask Director Pitts to attend the next Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Ferencz stated that he felt that having the assistance of an engineer would be important for the Commission's work on the issue and he asked if Charleston County or SCDOT had an engineer that could help. Mr. Kerr answered that the Public Works division of Charleston County handled the administration of the City's NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) and he could ask if they could help. He added that the County's focus for the City was more water quality over handling water quantities, so they are two slightly different issues, but he was sure they could help.

Mr. Ferencz asked if they could be present at the next meeting. Mr. Kerr answered that he could ask, but if the Public Works staff is already coming, did the Commission also want to have Charleston County present. The Commission agreed to have the City's Public Works staff at the November meeting and the County's engineer at the December meeting.

Mr. Ferencz made a motion to review a draft of a standardized process for dealing with drainage issues at the next meeting. The motion died without a second.

The Commission generally agreed to progress as discussed and have discussions with the Public Works staff at their next meeting.

DISCUSS IMPERVIOUS SURFACE REQUIREMENTS

Mr. Kerr explained that at the last meeting the Commission discussed options for reducing impervious surface requirements including reducing the allowable lot coverage, creating a minimum standard for area to be left vegetative, requiring all paving materials to be pervious, and modifying the lot fill requirements.

Mr. Ferencz asked if the City currently had minimum standards for areas to be left vegetative. Mr. Kerr answered no, that an owner could cover their entire yard in pervious paving.

Mr. Denton explained that in almost every community he worked in they have a 40% lot coverage limit, like the Isle of Palms, and he felt that it was primarily an aesthetic consideration. He added that he doubted that the limit was based on much analysis. He stated that he worried that adjusting this number without any scientific basis may be more of a feel-good approach than a problem-solving approach.

The group agreed to consider a minimum percent of the lot to be left vegetative, adding standards for pervious materials and considering amending the lot filling provisions.

UPDATE ON EXPANSION OF PUBLIC SEWER ORDINANCES

Mr. Kerr explained that at the last meeting, the Commission had passed on a series of recommendations for Council to consider regarding the expansion of public sewer. He stated that because of the lack of time between the Commission meeting and the Council meeting, the recommendations did not make it onto the Council agenda, but they would be on their next agenda for consideration.

He stated that the Water and Sewer Commission staff had had made him aware that they had reservations about the provision that would reduce the allowable lot coverage and house size for lots served by septic systems. The Sewer Commission staff believed that this provision might have the effect of driving more people to the grinder system program, which may cause the Sewer Commission problems in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

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