

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
September 14, 2011

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard on September 14, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. Members attending included Bev Ballow, David Cohen, Ron Denton, Pete Doherty, Diane Oltorik, Noel Scott and Don Smith; 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.

Chairman David Cohen called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The next item on the agenda was the review of the minutes of the July 27, 2011 meeting. Ms. Ballow noted that, at the bottom of the third page, it referenced cars parking on the "roadway," and it was probably more accurate to state that the cars parked on the "roadside." Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes with the amended text, and Mr. Doherty seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION OF PARKING MANAGEMENT

Mr. Cohen explained that he wanted to discuss the timeframe of the Planning Commission's work on the issue of parking. He stated that there may be a consultant being hired to assist with the issue, but that the group could continue to work towards making a recommendation to City Council and holding a public forum. The group generally agreed that it was wise to continue working towards making a recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Cohen explained that Mr. Scott had distributed information for the members to review, and he asked Mr. Scott to walk the group through his idea. Mr. Scott stated that he first looked at what the City needed to do in terms of complying with OCRM's minimum standards for a beach management plan. He stated that it would comply with their minimum standards to have ten cars at 5th Avenue and 2nd Avenue, because of the extensive parking in the commercial district. He said that, having determined that this is all that will be required, he visited the area and tried to determine what could be reasonably added to be above and beyond the minimum standards. He distributed sketches and stated he thought that, in addition to the ten cars at 2nd and 5th Avenues, about 35 more cars could be parked in the Ocean Boulevard right-of-way perpendicular to the roadway with five or six cars at each beach access point. He stated that this pattern could then be replicated in other areas, such as Palm Boulevard, and he thought it would be a consistent way of dealing with the parking throughout the island.

Mr. Smith asked why only 55 cars would be allowed to park on Ocean Boulevard if there is ample room for more cars. Mr. Scott answered that more cars becomes more crowded and less pleasing to the neighbors, and it could be a model that is uniformly applied throughout the island. Mr. Scott stated that, if the group thought more cars would be appropriate, the number of cars at each beach path could be increased.

Ms. Ballow explained that she felt like the Planning Commission's direction had changed from one of how to improve safety and traffic flow to one of how to allow as few parking spaces as possible, which she did not think was appropriate. She stated that she felt it was important to be considerate to the general public who do not live on the Isle of Palms ensuring that they can access the beach in a safe and controlled manner.

Mr. Smith explained that he liked many aspects of Mr. Scott's proposal, but he felt that it may be too complicated.

Mr. Cohen stated that he liked Mr. Scott's proposal, especially the flexibility that it could provide. He explained his belief that the strategy ultimately adopted by the City would have to be flexible and allow for implementation over time.

Ms. Oltorik explained that she felt that the parking plan for the island needed to be fair and consistent, which is one of the primary reasons she has supported the idea of allowing parallel parking on the ocean side of Palm Boulevard since the beginning of the discussions on parking. She added that this same configuration could be adopted for Ocean Boulevard.

Mr. Smith explained that he thought it would be useful to create a master list of the ideas currently under consideration by the Commission. Mr. Cohen stated that he agreed and he would try to put a list together before the next meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mr. Doherty asked about the signs installed at the Breach Inlet end of the island regarding the restriction of surfers and kiteboarders not being any closer than 100 feet to a swimmer. He asked if this was an island-wide prohibition and, if so, was it enforced and were there issues that led to the installation of the signs.

Mr. Scott explained that he took offense to people misrepresenting the efforts of the Planning Commission in an effort to gain political support. He showed the group an advertisement for Jimmy Carroll that suggests the Planning Commission and City Council advocates a plan of paving paradise, which is inaccurate. Neither the Planning Commission nor City Council have supported paving anything to his knowledge.

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Mr. Denton explained that it had been brought to his attention that Ms. Oltorik had written a letter to Charleston County Council, which was published in the Island Eye, and signed the letter as a member of the Planning Commission. He question whether it was appropriate for her to identify herself as a member of the Planning Commission, when the Planning Commission had no involvement on the matter being addressed in the letter and a casual reader may construe the letter otherwise.

Mr. Cohen explained that the time for the Planning Commission to begin reviewing the Comprehensive Plan was nearing, so the members should begin re-familiarizing themselves with the document.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, David Cohen, Chairman.