

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
November 14, 2007

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the Recreation Center on November 14, 2007, at 5:30PM. Members attending included Barbara Bergwerf, Pat Campbell, Ron Denton, Bob Hooper, Michael Loftus and David Stevens; also the Director of Planning, Douglas Kerr was present. Sandy Stone was absent. 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.

Mr. Loftus explained that as a result of being elected to City Council he wanted to step down as Chairman and allow the Vice Chairman, Ron Denton, to assume the position.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Denton explained that the next point of business would be to elect a Vice Chairman and asked for nominations. Mr. Hooper nominated Pat Campbell for the position and Mr. Stevens seconded the nomination. With no additional nominations, the vote was unanimous to elect Mr. Campbell.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The next item on the agenda was the review of the minutes of the October 10th, 2007 meeting. Mr Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION OF COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Mr. Denton welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming and asked Mr. Kerr to give some background information to the audience. Mr. Kerr explained that the Commission had been looking into the commercial area for over two years. He explained that the Commission perceived a problem with maintaining a commercial district with the high price of real estate and the short season for commercial activity. He added that a consulting firm was hired to help analyze the problem and suggest changes to the zoning code. He explained that the Commission had been sidetracked with other issues and recently resumed the discussions of the district and that the group collectively agreed that it would be helpful to have input from those people who have first hand knowledge of the district. He stated that this was the first of three meetings that would be dedicated to hearing from people involved with the area.

Mr. Denton asked for comments. Ms. Sherry Johnson, owner of My Favorite Things, addressed the Commission and explained that parking is the number one

problem. She explained that there was not enough parking, that the meter system was confusing to visitors and that the enforcement was too firm. She said that the problems last from March through to September and that this past year was the worst yet. She suggested painting additional signage on the face of the curbing that directed people to the pay kiosks and she suggested that the patrol officers be more helpful to visitors.

Mr. Campbell suggested that the Commission request data from the Police Department, the Charleston County Parks Commission and the managers of the City lots on parking issues including the number of spaces, revenues generated and occupancy rates for the past three years. Mr. Kerr indicated that he would work on getting this information.

Ms. Susan Holmes, property manager for the Beach Company, addressed the Commission and explained that events held in the district in the off-season were helpful, like the tree lighting and the movie. She suggested having more winter events to help in the off season and she gave the example of sponsoring a weekend for horseback riding on the beach.

Joe Petro, owner of Coconut Joe's, explained that he was concerned about the new public safety facility reducing the number of spaces in the parking lot. He explained that this parking was critical to his business and that a loss of 60 spaces would be terrible for his business. He also explained that the up-lighting in the street was good, but there was poor down-lighting and that pedestrians at night might have a difficult time seeing the sidewalk. He added that activities for kids would be helpful. He said that parents wanting to make an event of going to the beach want something else to do and they often ask what is available for kids. Mr. Hooper stated that maybe the Recreation Department could consider hosting activities in the area for kids.

Russ Stemke explained that he owned one of the residential structures on Palm Boulevard between 18th Avenue and 21st Avenue and he explained that he thought it would be good for the district to be enlarged to include these properties. He explained that the Limited Commercial (LC) zoning district allowed only low-impact office uses, which he thought would compatible with the area.

Mr. Denton thanked everybody for coming and encouraged those interested to come to the next few meetings to hear the input from others.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.
Respectfully submitted, Ron Denton, Chairman.