

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
November 13, 2013

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard on November 13, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. Members attending included Bev Ballow, Ron Denton, Richard Ferencz, Patrick Harrington, Penny Lewis, Don Smith and Noel Scott. 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 Noel Scott called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Scott explained that the first item on the agenda was the approval of the October 9, 2013 minutes. Mr. Ferencz explained that in the description of the vehicle signs there was no mention of the fact that the Planning Commission wanted to craft the amendment in a way that would allow existing signs that did not comply with new code to remain until the vehicle is replaced. Mr. Kerr explained that this wording was included in the detailed attachment to the minutes, but he would also add it to the body of the minutes.

Mr. Ferencz stated that the minutes mentioned that Mr. Kerr would forward an e-mail from the City Administrator regarding the efforts that had taken place regarding beach traffic and he asked if this had been done. Mr. Kerr answered that he believed it had been done, but he would send it again to be sure.

Ms. Ballow made a motion to approve the minutes with the amendments made by Mr. Ferencz. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

RECOMMENDATION ON REVISED VEHICLE SIGN ORDINANCE

Mr. Kerr explained that at a previous meeting, the Planning Commission had reviewed a new ordinance regulating the parking of commercial vehicles that had been suggested by the City Attorney as an alternative to the vehicle sign ordinance and asked that it be modified and reconsidered. He explained that the redline version of the proposed change had been distributed and that the majority of the revisions suggested by the Planning Commission had been incorporated, with the exception of language that would grandfather certain vehicles. He explained that in drafting the amendment, the City Attorney felt that it was not advisable to include language that spoke to only one nonconforming vehicle and that this vehicle would best be dealt with administratively with a letter to the owner of the vehicle explaining the code change and advising that once the vehicle was replaced, the new vehicle would need to comply with the new code.

He explained that this change moved the vehicle sign language out of the Zoning section of the code and into the general Motor Vehicle and Traffic section of the code, so it was a significant restructuring of the code. He summarized the change as restricting vehicle signs on vehicles longer than 20 feet, but allowing signs on vehicles that are less than 20 feet in length. He explained that in commercial districts, vehicles with signage that are longer than 20 feet would have two hours to park and conduct their business and then they would need to be moved.

The Commission generally agreed that the language accurately reflected their direction at the last meeting and Mr. Scott made a motion to recommend City Council adopt the code as proposed. Mr. Ferencz seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

REVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN- TRANSPORTATION & PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENTS

Mr. Scott explained that the next item on the agenda was the review of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Kerr explained that at the last meeting the Commission reviewed the Transportation Element, but he had not updated the traffic counts and that there was a lot of discussion about improving the graph in the body of Transportation Element. He explained that he had included edits in the section, including a new graph format that was created by Mr. Ferencz, but he had discovered that there have been problems with the traffic counts since the last review of the Comprehensive Plan. He explained that the current plan showed trends for each month since 2003, but that the new data is inconsistent for 2011 and 2012 so he questioned if the all of the data should be removed from the plan or if it should be shown from 2003 through 2013 with an explanation that the data for 2011 and 2012 was incomplete.

Mr. Ferencz asked how the traffic counts were collected and why there would be such a long period of inconsistent data. Mr. Kerr explained that he had discussed the issue with the Chief of Police and it sounded as though it took several attempts at identifying the cause of problem. Initially the Chief thought it was a lack of power, but ultimately he determined that the counters needed new motherboards. Ms. Lewis asked how frequently the data was collected. Mr. Kerr answered that he did not know. Mr. Smith asked if there were sources of similar data from other jurisdiction. Mr. Kerr explained that he did not have a lot of detail about traffic counting, but if the Commission wanted to discuss the matter with the Chief he could try to reach him by phone.

Mr. Kerr contacted Chief Buckhannon via phone and asked if he would explain to the group how the data is collected. Chief Buckhannon explained that there were two traffic counters one at Breach Inlet and one of the Isle of Palms Connector and both require

that a laptop be hooked up and the data downloaded. He explained that the equipment is 14 years old and has become less reliable in recent years.

Ms. Lewis asked how frequently the data is collected. Chief Buckhannon answered that it is generally checked on a monthly basis, as time permits.

Mr. Harrington asked the Chief he planned to replace the equipment and if so if it would be helpful if the Planning Commission sent a recommendation to Council to show their support for such an expenditure.

Chief Buckhannon explained that he probably would include replacement equipment in next year's budget, but it would not be available to him until the summer, if it were approved. He stated that support from the Planning Commission would be helpful.

Mr. Harrington asked what it would take to purchase the equipment before the summer. Chief Buckhannon explained that it would have to be approved by City Council as an unbudgeted expense, but if Council authorized the purchase, it could be done.

Mr. Ferencz asked the Chief how much he expected new equipment to cost. Chief Buckhannon explained that the cost would probably range from \$4,000 to \$9,000 for both units depending on the sophistication of the equipment.

The group thanked Chief Buckhannon for his time.

Mr. Harrington made a motion to send a recommendation to City Council expressing their support for replacing the equipment. He explained that he was fearful that the equipment might fail again during the summer months and he felt that the Council should be made aware of the urgency of the matter.

Mr. Ferencz seconded the motion and explained that he understood that a large part of the work being done by the consultant working on the issue of beach traffic parking would include substantiating the need to regulate parking with data. He explained that he felt that this data is always important, but with the efforts currently underway it was absolutely critical.

The group voted unanimously to forward a recommendation to City Council expressing their support of efforts to ensure accurate traffic counts going forward including the purchase of new equipment.

Mr. Kerr asked the group if they felt the Comprehensive Plan should be amended to include a goal of ensuring accurate traffic count data is collected. The Commission agreed this should be added as a goal.

Mr. Kerr asked if the group preferred deleting the traffic counts from the Plan entirely or showing the traffic counts with two years of incomplete data. The group agreed to strike the traffic counts entirely until the next update and it could be added back.

Ms. Ballow asked if the group thought it would be appropriate to add golf carts and low speed vehicles to the list of alternate modes of transportation planned for in Strategy 8.1.3. After general discussion on the issues of golf carts and their regulation, the group agreed that the strategy should be updated to include golf carts and low speed vehicles.

Mr. Kerr explained that the last element of the Comprehensive Plan was Priority Investment. He explained that this was a new section added at the last update as a result of the 2007 Priority Investment Act and that it required that communities look at funding sources for public infrastructure and identify projects that would be candidates for funding. He explained that the existing plan identified the major infrastructure projects and he did not think any of these had changed since the last update. The group made several minor edits and agreed that the existing language was still appropriate.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mr. Kerr explained that the Commission still needed to do three hours of continuing education and asked if the group was agreeable to dedicating the last meeting of the year to this training. The group agreed that the next meeting would be a three hour training exercise.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Noel Scott, Chairman