

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
March 9, 2016

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard on March 9, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. Members attending included, Vince DiGangi, Richard Ferencz, Bill Mills and Lisa Safford; the Director of Planning Douglas Kerr was present as well. Ron Denton, Lewis Gregory and Noel Scott were 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.

Chairman Richard Ferencz called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ferencz explained that the next item on the agenda was the approval of the February 17th, 2016 minutes. Mr. Mills made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted and Ms. Safford seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Ferencz noted that there were a number of people in the audience and asked if the Commission would consider opening the meeting up to public comments. The group agreed that it would be good to hear public comment.

Stuart Coleman, 10 Live Oak Drive, stated that he lived in the adjacent neighborhood and he felt like many of his concerns were shared by his neighbors. He stated that he was glad to see plans that included site improvements, but he was particularly concerned about the inclusion of a drystack facility because of how it may impact the residential neighborhoods around the marina. He said that he was also concerned with the idea of eliminating one of the boat ramp lanes and going from three to two lanes.

Brian Berrigan, Isle of Palms Marina and Market operator, explained that he had things about the plan that he liked and disliked. He stated that he did not see an entrance to the restaurant parking area and that their parking seemed to be inadequate. He stated that most of the people that use the boat ramp also use the store and he felt that the boat ramp arrangement would add to walking trips across a busy line of traffic, which he thought would add to the congestion, rather than reduce it. He stated that he did not like the idea of the gas pumps being so far from the store and so close to the residences. He said that he liked the idea of a park on the water's edge.

He stated that in terms of the boat drystack, he has heard that the idea that this facility would not serve the residents of the Isle of Palms, but that he intended for it to serve only island residents. He stated that he would initially offer the spaces to Isle of Palms

residents and then to property owners and he felt very confident that it would be full without needing to open availability to the general public. He added that he felt that the drystack facility would allow his operation to be completely self-contained on the site, without needing to spill out into the neighborhoods as it currently does. He stated that on busy weekends during the summer he could limit boat launches to residents to minimize the congestion on those days.

He stated that he remembers when the City bought the marina facility Councilman Abele informing the Council at that time that the facility was in really bad shape in it would require significant investment to keep it viable. He stated that this was almost 20 years ago and the parking lot and the docks have only deteriorated since that time. He said that the revenue from the drystack facility would provide a revenue stream to make these overdue improvements.

Mr. Mills asked Mr. Berrigan how important fuel sales on land were, if he had fuel on the docks. Mr. Berrigan answered it was very important and it would become even more important if a drystack facility was added.

Mr. Mills stated that it sounded as though a key objection to the drystack facility was the noise it would generate and asked what his thoughts were on this. Mr. Berrigan answered that there were a lot of ways the noise could be minimized and he believed that the noise levels could be comparable to a weed eater operating, which occurs all over the island.

Mr. Mills asked Mr. Berrigan, if allowed, did he intended to finance the construction of the drystack facility or would he expect the City to build it and he operate it. Mr. Berrigan answered that it was his intention to finance the construction independently of the City.

Mr. Kerr asked if Mr. Berrigan preferred the plan that was drawn by John Shaffer over the plan developed by ATM. Mr. Berrigan answered that he liked components of both and he felt that the best plan is probably a hybrid of the two.

Mr. Ferencz asked Mr. Berrigan if he liked the idea of the promenade around the site. Mr. Berrigan answered that he did and that when he met with ATM he stressed the need to provide better access for bikes and golf carts.

Mr. Ferencz asked what percentage of his current traffic could be contributed to island residents. Mr. Berrigan answered that he was not proud of it, but that he has approximately 50 wet slips rented annually and of those eight are to residents, and of those eight boats only six have left the dock in the last year.

Mr. Ferencz stated that he believed he had seen a study that indicated that only about ten percent of the boats launched could be attributed to island residents. Mr. Berrigan responded that this data was based on revenue and that the cost to residents was half of what it was for nonresidents, so it is probably twice that percentage. He added that he did not completely trust this data because not everyone knows that they need to pay and he felt like a lot of people had not been included in the collection of the data.

Ms. Safford asked why there was such a focus on transient docks and facilities. Mr. Berrigan responded that this was primarily because of the Boating Infrastructure Grant funding opportunities that could be sought for those facilities, which only applies to facilities that serve transient boats larger than 26 feet long.

Mr. Kerr asked if Mr. Berrigan had a way of determining what the demand among island residents was for the drystack facility. Mr. Berrigan answered that he believed he could figure out what the demand is on the island.

Mr. Berrigan thanked the Commission and stated that he needed to leave to attend to a prior engagement.

Mr. Rick DeForest, 35 Morgan Cove Drive, stated that he felt that the site was already very congested and he questioned the wisdom of adding more boat storage capacity when it appeared that there were already a lot of unused boat slips available in the Wild Dunes Yacht Harbor docks.

Mr. Jim Raih, 3104 Cameron Boulevard, stated that he is very familiar with his site because of his previous work on the Planning Commission and the Real Property Committee. He stated that he was not impressed with what ATM has produced so far. He stated that he felt that the traffic flow within the site was problematic. He stated that he did not think it was wise to reduce the number of ramp lanes from three to two. He added that currently barges are able to access the ramp, which he doubted would be possible if the lanes were reduced. He stated that while some people appreciate the jet ski rental facility, it generates very little in terms of revenue to the City. At some point the City is going to have to determine that the site is full and nothing can be added to the site.

Elizabeth Campsen, 32 Waterway Island Drive, stated that she was concerned about the drystack storage as well as the parking on the site. She stated that originally the marina was a low key operation, but it has morphed into a bit of a wild west and it is now bleeding out into the surrounding neighborhoods. She was concerned that ATM's proposal appears to show a reduction in parking spaces, which she believed is already

inadequate. She added that she is encouraged to see the redevelopment of the site, because it needs attention. She thought that maybe a referendum vote would be in order on the drystack facility.

With no one else wanting to speak, the public comment period was closed.

DISCUSSION OF MARINA MASTER PLAN PROJECT

Ms. Safford explained that she was concerned with the pro forma section of ATM's report in that it had the incorrect terms of the marina lease, specifically the City shares in profits over \$1M, not \$450,000.

Mr. Kerr stated that he would make ATM aware of this and ask that it be corrected.

Mr. Ferencz asked what the expectations were of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Kerr answered that he was speculating, but that he believed the City Council would like to have recommendations regarding the key components of the master plan, specifically whether or not dry stack storage should be included in future plans and whether or not the City should proceed with one of the two concepts developed by ATM or should they pursue other plans, such as the one developed by the marina with SHFR Waterfront Solutions or some other hybrid plan. He added that the Commission was specifically tasked by state law with making judgements about major investments by the City and whether or not they would be in conflict with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Ferencz stated that in regards to the drystack storage, he personally would love to have the facility, because he keeps his boat in a Mount Pleasant drystack facility, but if the community objects to it, he would be inclined to leave it out of the future plans.

Mr. Kerr asked the group if the point of the drystack being used solely by City residents would have any bearing on their opinion. Mr. Mills answered that for him it would, but also he would want to have a clearer understanding of what the level of disruption would be to the neighbors.

Mr. Ferencz stated that he thought it would be useful for either ATM or Design Works to be present at the next meeting to discuss the plan. Mr. Kerr stated that he would try to arrange this.

The group agreed that it would be useful to develop a pros and cons list to help make judgements on the issues. Mr. Kerr stated that he would work to develop this.

Ms. Safford said she would be interested in hearing the other tenants input on the plan. Ms. Pope with the Morgan Creek Grill said that Jay Clarke would be the one to provide this input from the Morgan Creek Grill and he was not present.

Mike Fiem with Tidal Wave Sports was present and he said that they would share many of Mr. Berrigan's concerns about traffic flow within the site. He stated that it was critical to their business to have gas on the landside of the marina. He stated that he felt that it would be shortsighted to not include additional public restroom facilities as this was a constant problem for the site. He said that the tenants on the site should be encouraged to carpool to reduce the parking impact each use has on the site. He said that the feedback he has heard on the idea of drystack has all been positive and he thought it would be a great asset to the site.

Mr. Ferencz said that he would like to arrange a special meeting before the next regular meeting to be able to formulate questions for a response from ATM. Mr. Kerr answered that we would try to arrange this via email.

DISCUSSION OF SEPTIC SYSTEMS ON THE ISLAND

Mr. Ferencz stated that he was impressed with the study that GEL had done years ago and he asked who paid for this work. Mr. Kerr responded that he believed it was paid for with grant funds. Mr. Ferencz stated that he thought it would be useful to recheck three or four of the ditches included in the study to see if they are at the same levels they were when the study was done. Mr. Kerr stated that he could see what this would cost, but he believed that the study was done in February and he assumed that for the comparison to be meaningful, it would have to be done during the same time of year. He said he would inquire with the person who conducted the study to see how much it would cost and when it would be advisable to do so.

Mr. Kerr added that the Water and Sewer Commission was still working on responding to the Commission's questions and he would forward their response, once he has it.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Ferencz, Chairman