

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
October 13, 2010

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the Building Department conference room, 1301 Palm Boulevard on October 13, 2010, at 4:30PM. Members attending included Bev Ballow, Pat Campbell, Ron Denton, Diane Oltorik, Noel Scott and Dick Watson; the Director of Planning Douglas Kerr was present as well. David Cohen 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.

Chairman Ron Denton called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The first item on the agenda was the review of the minutes of the September 8th, 2010 meeting. Ms. Oltorik stated that she had pointed out two (2) typographical errors on page 3 and made a motion to approve the minutes with those corrections. Ms. Ballow seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION OF SIGN ORDINANCE WITH DAN SWEENEY

Mr. Kerr explained that he had a discussion with Mr. Sweeney several months ago regarding the signage at the marina store. He stated that Mr. Sweeney was working for the marina manager on a master plan for the site that included signage. It became apparent during their conversation that Mr. Sweeney had a lot of experience with sign ordinances and was familiar with the Isle of Palms ordinance, so he asked Mr. Sweeney to discuss his perceptions of the sign ordinance with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Sweeney explained that he had spent a lot of time looking at the marina site; the signs are typically small for the buildings and poorly organized. He explained that the organizational issues at the marina site go beyond just the signage, but he felt that the existing signage did not help the issue.

Mr. Sweeney gave a slide show presentation that showcased examples of many signs that he felt were very attractive and effective, but that would be prohibited by the Isle of Palms sign ordinance including neon signs, moving signs, roof signs, murals and large antique signs.

He explained that one of the challenges he sees is that none of the signs he mentioned as being effective would be attractive if they were overused. He gave the example of the roof sign at Vickery's on Shem Creek and explained that he thought this was a great sign for the setting and location of the business,

however, it would be awful if every business in the area had similar signs. He explained that, because he believed signs were subjective, the City should look at adding flexibility to its code that would allow an occasional relaxation of the standards when the result would be beneficial to the community.

He added that, in his discussions with Mr. Kerr, he understood that some of the issues the Planning Commission was looking into involved temporary signs. He stated that he generally understood the Commission's hesitance to relax the prohibition on banner signs, as they are typically made by vendors and unattractive.

Ms. Oltorik explained that she appreciated many of the signs shown during the presentation, particularly, the signs that were evocative and nostalgic.

Mr. Watson asked whether the Isle of Palms' sign ordinance was a reaction to the Myrtle Beach, and the group, generally, agreed that this was the case.

Ms. Oltorik asked whether ordinances could be crafted in a way as to allow for good signs. Mr. Sweeney answered that was the way the process works in the City of Charleston, and they will generally grant relief for a sign that they see as beneficial. Mr. Kerr stated that the only way he thought such a process could work on the Isle of Palms would be the creation of a review board.

Ms. Ballow remembered when the revamped the sign ordinance was adopted, and she felt that the effort was almost entirely focused on rental and real estate signs in the residential areas.

The group thanked Mr. Sweeney for coming and concluded their discussion of signs.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mr. Kerr explained that the date to meet with City Council on the Parking Management Plan had been confirmed for Tuesday, October 19th at 6:30.

ADJOURNMENT

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